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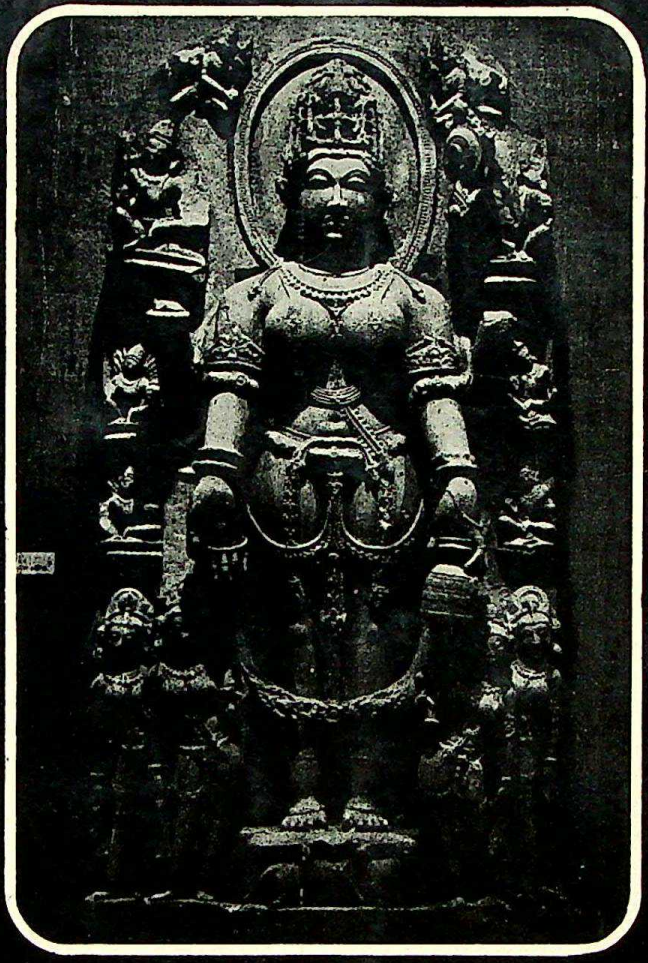

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Iconography of Pārvatī

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ICONOGRAPHY OF PĀRVATĪ

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ICONOGRAPHY OF PARVATI

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R.D. TRIVEDI

With a Foreword
by
Prof. C. Sivaramamurti

AGAM KALA PRAKASHAN
DELHI
1981

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First Published 1981.
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Published by : Agam Prasad, M.A., P.G. Diploma in Museology,
for AGAM KALA PRAKASHAN,
34, Community Centre,
Ashok Vihar, Phase-I,
Delhi-110052,
Phone-713395.

Printed by : PRINT INDIA, A-38/2, Mayapuri,
Phase I,
New Delhi-110064.

Plates Printed by : RAJ PRESS, R-3 Inderpuri,
New Delhi-110012.

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Dedicated
to the sacred
memory of my grandfather
Pandit Ayodhya Prasad Trivedi.

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FOREWORD

It is indeed a pleasure for me to write a foreword to this beautiful book on Iconography of Pārvatī by Shri Rakesh Datta Trivedi who has made it so pleasant to read and enjoy. Sanskrit rhetoricians have described categories of styles of composition, enjoyed like grapes eaten as they are with ease, like banana after peeling the cover, and the cocoanut which requires the fibre to be removed, the shell broken and the kernel taken out with some difficulty to ultimately taste it. This book belongs to the first category with the enjoyment of its sweet taste assured with the utmost ease.

Shri Trivedi is not only gifted with an excellent knowledge of Sanskrit which is a boon to those desirous of understanding Indian culture at its source, but he has also a rare insight into texts to corroborate and comment on ideas expressed in art. Kālidāsa's ideas on Pārvatī's delicate and charming form, the explanation of each of her epithets themselves justified on proper grounds of derivation, her relisation of penance as the much better means of winning Śiva's love than even her unparalleled physical charm, her gradual enhancing of the rigour of penance and the *pañchāgnitāpa* with body so frail and delicate, her abstaining from even a nominal feed on leaves, her eyes fixed on the blazing sun,

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with the four flames around her fiercely heating her, as she stood on a single foot, with even her hands raised up, so tellingly chiselled in a variety of sculptures from all over the least explored area of our vast sub-continent have been so well interpreted with appropriate quotations that the reading of the book becomes a rare delight.

How she is favoured by the Lord who holds her hand as vaivāhikamūrti and how her good fortune excells even that of Gaṅgā who rests on his crest, the proverbial way of expressing the spouse domineering, is wonderfully expressed by Kālidāsa when he avows that even the highest sincere blessings of elders that wished her the highest conjugal bliss in the undivided affection of her husband were surpassed by her obtaining a half of Śiva's body itself in which she has merged in his hermaphrodite form : *tayā tu tasyārdhaśarīrabhājā paśchātkṛitāḥ snigdhajanāśiseo'pi, Kumārasaṁbhava,* 7, 28.

It is indeed a very interesting quotation from the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, 6.1, that Shri Trivedi has given to show that ultimately it is her intense love for him that won for her Śiva as her husband and not just the severe penance where she lived on leaves and even air, as, if these were so efficacious, even the bull and the snakes he wore that subsisted respectively on both these should have secured the same benefit : *nedam parṇasamīraṇāśanatapomāhātmyam ukshoragau paśyaitāvata eva samprati kṛitau tanmātravṛittī bahiḥ, premnaivārdham idam charācharaguroḥ prāpeyam ātmastutīr evam devavadhūmukhāchchhrutisukhāḥ śriṇvan aparṇāvatāt.*

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I congratulate Shri Trivedi on writing so lovely a book with suitable illustrations and the publisher Agam Kala Prakashan for producing it with an eye on tasteful aesthetic quality in its preparation. I am sure the world of scholars would welcome this delightful little book and enjoy its sweet flavour.

New Delhi
March 18, 1981.

C. Sivaramamurti

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PREFACE

In the context of Indian sculptural art, the study of iconography of various gods and goddesses is of immense importance. Without proper understanding of iconographic traits associated with the deities, it is not possible to appreciate correctly the ideas expressed in visual form through the medium of stone, metal or paint etc. The study of formal visual surfaces of a sculpture may or may not satisfy our visual taste, but it should be kept in view that it is not *all* of a piece of art. The content of a sculpture or painting is equally important and at many a time it is more important than its outer form if one is to understand the work of art fully and in its true significance. *Śilpa* texts dealing with iconography and literary works are very helpful in this connection.

In certain quarters of art study a trend has developed that a piece of art is to be appreciated alone without caring for its subject matter or without knowing what it represents. But so far Indian art is concerned it is very necessary to know about the ideas meant to be expressed through the various modes of visual representation, as in its essence Indian art is symbolic. From our day to day experience we can very well understand this phenomenon. When persons come across a piece of art in a museum or in a monument, the first question from them is about what the particular piece shows

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or represents. It may be a marvellously carved god or goddess or damsel or any other subject, the query 'What does it represent ?' stands at its place. When a visitor looks at a sculpture and notes its visual specialities such as its bodily form, ornamentation, drapery etc., he becomes more curious to know about the content of the sculpture. More appealing the external form, more a visitor becomes interested in knowing the person or episode represented in the sculpture. We may recall here relevant remarks of A.K. Coomaraswamy, "The fundamental judgement is of the degree of the artist's success in giving clear expression to the theme of his work. In order to answer the question, 'Has the thing been well said ?' it will evidently be necessary for us to know what it was that was to be said. It is for this reason that in every discussion of works of art we must begin with their subject matter.....The *what* of art is far more important than the *how*; it should, indeed, be the what that determines the how, as form determines shape". (Why Exhibit Works of Art, *Christian and Oriental philosophy of Art*, New York, 1956, p. 17 and 10).

So far major gods and goddesses are concerned their iconographic study has been done by a number of great scholars. But the field of Indian iconography is so vast that an exhaustive and all comprehensive study for all times to come seems to be an impossibility. Often we come across the images of various gods and goddesses in the temples and museums which might not have been noticed earlier. In the case of several minor deities this remark is specially true. Similarly, fresh literary references which help in the identification of details

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of iconographic representations may also come to our notice. Such references naturally deserve study and comparison with the available corresponding deities.

In the following pages an attempt has been made to describe and interpret some of the images of Pārvatī mostly from central India. This study is meant to bring to the notice of the scholars and other interested persons a number of rare images of Pārvatī most of which have been personally visited by me at various sites. It may give a glimpse of the type of images lying at remote sites and temples not so commonly visited.

The study is divided in three chapters. The first chapter, Pārvatī and Her Early life, indicates the place of Pārvatī among other Hindu goddesses, her different names and her adoration to Śiva. The second chapter, Pārvatī in *Pañchatapas*, describes her severe penance alongwith the significance of her attributes and associates. The third chapter, Pārvatī as Śiva's Consort, refers to some major iconographic forms in which Pārvatī figures with Śiva and her sons, Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya.

I am deeply indebted to all the scholars whose works I have consulted and have drawn from them at several places as given in the references. I have no words to adequately express my gratitude to Shri C. Sivaramamurti who has so kindly blessed the book by writing a foreword and has always been an inspiration behind my iconographic studies. I am very grateful to the Archaeological Survey of India for providing photographic illustrations in Plates I-XVIII, XX, XXII-XXIV, XXVI-XXXII and XXXIV and all encouragement in doing this

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study. My thanks are also due to the Department of Archaeology, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh and Indore Museum, Indore, for supplying photographs given in Plates XIX, XXI, XXV and XXXIII. I am also thankful to Shri Agam Prasad of the Agam Kala Prakashan for so readily bringing out the book in such a short time.

The system of transliteration of Sanskrit portion has been followed as under :

ऋ = ṛi, अनुस्वार = ṁ, विसर्ग = ḥ, ङ् = ṅ च् = ch, छ् = chh, ञ् = ñ, ण् = ṇ, श् = ś, ष् = sh. स् = s, क्ष् = ksh, त्र् = tr, ज्ञ् = jñ,

Rakesh Datta Trivedi

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I. PARVATI AND HER EARLY LIFE

Of the various forms of goddesses described in ancient literature and *śilpa* texts and also represented in the sculptural art related to ancient temples, the place of Pārvatī is a unique one. In the realm of Śakti cult, she plays a significant role in one form or the other and many of the other important goddesses appear to emanate from her, as she is identified as the consort or Śakti (energy) of Śiva. In the *Devīmāhātmya* portion of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, many Śaktis are caused to originate from Pārvatī through Kauśikī who herself springs from Pārvatī's body on being praised by the gods :

śarīrakośādyattasyāḥ Pārvattyā niḥsṛitāmbikā|
Kauśikīti samasteshu tato lokeshu gīyate||
(*Devīmāhātmya*, V, 87).

The same context later describes the emergence of seven mother goddesses (*saptamātṛikās*) *i.e.* Brahmāṇī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaishṇavī, Vārāhī, Nārasiṁhī and Indrāṇī with their respective weapons and attributes to help her in the great struggle against the demons.[1]

As she was born as the daughter of the mountain Himavāna, she was called Pārvatī and two of her names *i.e.* Umā and Gaurī are closely associated with this aspect and also find mention in the iconographic texts.[2] In the *Vishṇudharmottara*

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Purāṇa her two names, Pārvatī and Umā, denote one and the same goddess who is none else than the consort of Śiva and the beloved daughter of Menā, the wife of Himavāna. She is described as the mother of whole universe, bestower of boons and responsible for all prosperity in the world :

devīmāvāhayishyāmi
Pārvatīṁ varadāmumām/
harasya dayitāṁ bhāryāṁ
chārvangīṁ bhūtivardhinīm// (104, 40-41).

In the *Kumārasaṁbhava* of Kālidāsa her names—Pārvatī, Umā and Aparṇā—have been clearly explained. Due to her parentage from *parvata* (mountain) Himavāna, she was given the name Pārvatī (*Pārvatītyābhijanena nāmnā*). Keeping in view her close association with severe penance in order to obtain Śiva as her husband, she got the other two names. When Pārvatī decided to undergo *tapas* (penance) at a very tender age, she was discouraged by her mother not to do so by saying "Oh ! No (*u mā*)" she became famous later on by the name of Umā :

tāṁ Pārvatītyābhijanena nāmnā
bandhupriyāṁ bandhujano juhāva/
umeti mātrā tapaso nishiddhā
paschādumākhyāṁ sumukhī jagāmā//
(*Kumārasaṁbhava*, I, 26).

To survive on fallen leaves of a tree (*viśirṇadruma-parṇa*) is regarded an extremity of penance but Pārvatī surpassed that stage when she left even leaves for her survival and earned the title of *aparṇā* (one without leaves) :

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svayaṁ viśīrṇadrumaparṇavṛittitā
parā hi kāshṭhā tapasastayā punaḥ/
tadapyapākīrṇamataḥ priyaṁvadāṁ
vadantyaparṇeti cha tāṁ purāvidaḥ//
(*Kumārasaṁbhava*, I, 28).

The name Aparṇā as pointed out by J.N. Banerjea in the sense of 'not even clad with a leaf garment, *i.e.* nude' cannot be suitably applied to a goddess like Pārvatī who is to be venerated so widely.[3] The correct interpretation of the term '*Aparṇā*' is the one as given in the *Kumārasaṁbhava* noted above. The idea of the *Kumārasaṁbhava* is also corroborated by the *Brahma Purāṇa* to explain the two names, Aparṇā and Umā.[4] The *Rāmāyaṇa* also mentions strict abstinence of Pārvatī. While describing the origin of Gaṅgā, Viśvāmitra naturally could not forget to mention the other daughter of Himavāna *i.e.* Umā, just because of her severe penance which became legendry in later times :

yā chānyā śailaduhitā kanyāsīd Raghunandana/
ugraṁ suvratamāsthāya tapastepe tapodhanā//
(*Rāmāyaṇa*, I, 35, 20).[5]

Gopinatha Rao mentions the image of Pārvatī represented with four hands holding *akshamālā*, images of Śiva and Gaṇeśa and *kamaṇḍalu* in her hands and resting between to *agnikuṇḍas* (fire pots). He reproduces only one image of the goddess from Ellora to illustrate the description.[6] The *Aparājitapṛichchhā* of Bhuvanadeva datable to the 12th-13th century A.D. and the *Rūpamaṇḍana*, a later compilation mainly based on the former, describe the four-handed goddess Pārvatī with the above noted attributes and placed between two fire-pots.[7] Icono-

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graphically the images of Umā and Gaurī are slightly different and they are to be portrayed with the minor variation in attributes. Both of them are four-handed and three attributes in their hands, *i.e. akshamālā* (rosary), lotus and *kamaṇḍalu* (water vessel) are common to them, but whereas Umā holds a mirror in her fourth hand, Gaurī bears *abhayamudrā* (pose of protection) in it.[8]

After her self-immolation in the *yajñakuṇḍa* (sacrificial altar) of her father, Satī was born in her next birth as the daughter of Himavāna, the great mountain. In the meantime a great demon, Tāraka, flourished who created all sorts of troubles for the gods and ascetics. The demon was so powerful that none of the gods was capable of conquering him in the battle. The only course for the gods to defeat that invincible demon was to have a son of Śiva as their commander-in-chief (*senāpati*). In this situation gods assembled together and thought of a plan how to arrange marriage of Pārvatī with Śiva in order to get their son for defeating Tāraka. They persuaded Kāma (the god of love) for approaching Śiva and affecting his feelings so that he willingly agrees to marry Pārvatī. On the other hand, Pārvatī, due to her association with Śiva in her previous birth, was naturally inclined to marry Śiva and none else in her present birth.

So Pārvatī started propitiating Śiva who was absorbed in meditation. First of all she worshipped Śiva as an ordinary devotee. Her first appearance before Śiva is elaborately described by Kālidāsa in the *Kumārasaṁbhava*. When she reached near the entrance (*pratihārabhūmim*) of Śiva's hermitage, at that time Śiva also regained consciousness to feel

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the outer world and relaxed his *vajraparyaṅka* or *padmāsana* pose.[9] This first encounter of Pārvatī with Śiva is represented in one of the terracotta plaques from Ahichchhatra (District Bareilly, U.P.) now preserved in the collection of the National Museum, New Delhi and is particularly noteworthy (Plate I). The terracotta plaque belongs to the Gupta period (5th century A.D.)[10] and seems to be inspired by the description given in the *Kumārasaṁbhava*. J.N. Banerjea refers to this plaque as an example of *Jñāna Dakshiṇāmūrti* as there are traces of the lower right hand of the main figure held in the *Jñānamudrā*.[11] In the terracotta plaque under discussion four-armed figure of Śiva is seated in relaxed position (*ardhaparyaṅkāsana*). He holds a rosary surmounted by a lotus flower in his back right hand near his ear and a pot containing a pair of small plants in the back left hand; his mutilated lower right hand seems to be in *Jñāna* or *Vyākhyāna mudrā* as suggested by the remnant of fingers and his lower left hand rests on the thigh. The head of the figure, slightly bent towards left side, carries *jaṭābhāra* tied in a heavy knot, and a broad strip of *yajñopavīta* runs from his left shoulder down below his right arm. His short lower garment appears to be the skin of a deer (*kṛishṇatvacha*) decorated with striped pattern. The *yajñopavīta* borne by the figure also seems to be made of skin of a deer as is indicated by its broad shape and a prominent knot. The use of *ajinayajñopavīta* by the ascetics is quite well known from the ancient sculptures.[12] The famous Nara-Nārāyaṇa panel from the Daśāvatāra Temple at Deogarh, which happens to be contemporary to the plaque under discussion, represents the figure of

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Nara wearing a *yajñopavīta* of deer-skin with the head of a deer clearly shown on it.[13] In this way the representation of Śiva on the terracotta plaque from Ahichchhatra strikingly compares with the description of Kālidāsa in which Śiva is described having *jaṭābhāra* on his head, a doubly encircled rosary (*akshasūtra*) on his ear and the skin of a black antelope tied with a knot around his body :

bhujaṅgamonnaddhajaṭākalāpaṁ
karṇāvasaktadviguṇākshasūtram/
kaṇṭhaprabhāsaṅgaviśeshanīlāṁ
kṛishṇatvacharh granthimatīṁ dadhānam/
(*Kumārasaṁbhava*, III, 46).

On the left of Śiva, in the plaque under discussion, there are two figures, one male and the other female with her hands folded in the pose of adoration. The female figure ornamented with rich coiffure, *kuṇḍalas*, necklace, *kaṅkaṇa* (bracelets) and a scarf on her shoulders may be identified with that of Pārvatī who attended Śiva before her marriage with the god. The male figure in the upper corner with *chinamudrā* (pose of indication) in his right hand and his head bent towards Śiva may represent Nandī who ushered Pārvatī to the presence of Śiva. The *Kumārasaṁbhava* describes the occasion that Nandī, the foremost attendant of Śiva, first informed the Lord of the arrival of Pārvatī in the hermitage and after getting Śiva's permission by way of the movement of his eye-brows, led her to him :

tasmai śaśaṁsa praṇipatya Nandī
śuśrūshayā śailasutāmupetām/

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praveśayāmāsa cha bharturenāṁ
bhrūkshepamātrānumatapraveśām//

(*Kumārasaṁbhava*, III, 60).

In the terracotta plaque under reference Śiva is represented in the *ardhaparyaṅka* pose and, curiously enough, the *Kumārasaṁbhava* also mentions him in the relaxed position when Pārvatī reached before him (*paryaṅkabandhaṁ nibiḍaṁ bibheda*, III, 59). From the foregoing description it becomes clear that the scene illustrated on the terracotta plaque from Ahichchhatra represents Pārvatī approaching Śiva for worship before her resorting to undertake penances for getting Śiva as her husband and the scene appears to be based on the description given in the *Kumārasaṁbhava* of *Kālidāsa*.

Just at the moment when Pārvatī was adoring Śiva, Kāma, the god of love, wanted to arouse feeling of passion in Śiva by throwing his arrows. Śiva realised the intention of Kāma and stared around to spot him who was hidden in a cluster of trees. On this audacity of Kāma, Śiva got enraged and consequently opened his third eye emitting blazing fire which reduced Kāma to ashes within no time. That event is represented in the *Kāmadahanamūrtis* of Śiva. The destruction of Kāma was done in the presence of Pārvatī herself, so she became unhappy for the time being. Her parents also became disappointed at the initial failure of her daughter. But Pārvatī was not to loose her heart. As her simple adoration to Śiva and even her beautiful form failed to influence the Lord, she decided to undergo severe penances. Her parents tried to dissuade her from adopting such a hard

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course in life seeing her tender age. Later on realising Pārvatī's firm resolve in the matter, they permitted her to stay in the *tapovana* and practise *tapas* till she could please Śiva and achieve her desired result (*phalodayāntāya tapaḥ samādhaye, Kumārasaṁbhava*, VI, 6).

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1. *Dēvīmāhātmya*, VIII, 12-21.
2. *Rūpamaṇḍana*, V, 1-3; and Rao, T.A.G., *Elements of Hindu Iconograhy*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 360.
3. Banerjea, J.N., *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, Calcutta, 1956, p. 492.
4. *Aparṇā tu nirāhārā tāṁ mātā pratyabhāshata/*
   nishedhayantī chometi matrisnehena duḥkhitā//
   sā tathoktā tayā mātrā devīduścharachāriṇī/
   tenaiva nāmnā lokeshu vikhyātā surapūjitā//
   (*Brahma Purāṇa*, 34, 85-86).
5. Umā was married to Rudra and thus became the beloved wife of Śiva Mahādeva. (*Rāmāyaṇa*, I, 36).
6. Rao, T.A.G., *op. cit.*, p. 360; Plate CVIII, Fig. 1.
7. *akshasūtraṁ śivo devo gaṇādhyakshaḥ kamaṇḍaluḥ/*
   Pakshadvaye chāgnikuṇḍaṁ Pārvatī parvatodbhavā//
   (*Aparājitapṛichchhā*, 222, 9; and *Rūpamaṇḍana*, V, 3).
8. *akshasūtraṁ chāmbujaṁ cha darpaṇaścha kamaṇḍaluḥ/*
   evaṁ bhavedumāmūrtiḥ pūjitā tridaśairapi//
   akshasūtrābhayapadmaṁ tadadhaścha kamaṇḍaluḥ/
   gauryyāmūrtistathā chaiva kartavyā śivaśāsanī//
   (*Aparājitapṛichchhā*, 222, 8 and 10).
9. *Kumārasaṁbhava*, III, 58-59.
10. *Ancient India*, No. 4, 1947-48, pp. 169-70, Fig. 3.
11. *Op. cit.*, 1956, p. 471.
12. *Ancient India*, No. 6, p. 24.

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13. Vats, M.S., The Gupta Temple at Deogarh, *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, No. 70, p. 32, Plate XI (a). Deer also finds representation below the seat of Nārāyaṇa and in between the pedestals of two figures in the Deogarh panel.

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II. PARVATI IN PANCHATAPAS

Pañchatapas is an austere penance in which an ascetic performs the *tapas* sitting in the middle of four burning fires with the sun blazing over his head to which he is supposed to gaze constantly in the summer season. Thus the four fires placed on the four sides with the sun over head constitute five sources of providing heat and give the name to the *tapas*. As far as the significance of *Pañchatapas* is concerned, it has been regarded as one of the highest type of practices for earning the greatest merit. The *Mahābhārata* mentions it in connection with the *vānaprastha āśrama*, the third stage of life, when one is on the way to achieve complete detachment from the world after attaining the fulfilment of his worldly duties. To rise above the feeling of pleasure and pain in that stage, one should remain exposed to the rain during rainy season, stay in cold water during the winter and observe *pañchatapas* during the summer season.[1] The same idea is repeated in the *Manusmṛiti* where a person in the *vānaprastha āśrama* is recommended to undertake the *pañchatapas* during the summer.[2] The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* also recommends *pañchāgni* penance in the third stage of life (*grīshme tapyeta pañchāgnīn*, XI, 18, 4). Kālidāsa in his *Raghuvaṁśa* elaborates the description of *pañchatapas* when he describes sage Sutīkshṇa as observed

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by Rāma returning from Laṅkā in the *pushpaka vimāna*. Rāma notices the sage undergoing his penance in the middle of four fires with the sun shining above in the sky as the fifth source of heat. The nature of the penance and that of its performer is also suggestively contrasted here in order to point out that, though the *pañchatapas* is a very harsh observance, its performer should maintain a mild temperament :

havirbhujāmedhavatāṁ chaturṇāṁ
madhye lalāṭaṁtapasaptasaptiḥ |
asau tapasyatyaparastapasvī
nāmnā Sutīkshṇaścharitena dāntaḥ ||

(*Raghuvaṁśa*, XIII, 41).

The sage is also mentioned here gazing to the sun in the sky. This action of the sage was interrupted with the passage of Rāma's celestial car in the sky. But as soon as it passed over, the sage again fixed his intent look on the sun as before :

dṛishṭiṁ vimānavyavadhānamuktāṁ
punaḥ sahasrārchishi saṁnidhatte ||

(*Raghuvaṁśa*, XIII, 44).

Pañchatapas, though generally performed by ascetics, was also observed by maids in order to get a desired consort. In this *tapas*, the performer, seated or standing amidst four fires, would constantly gaze to the blazing sun and this practice points out that basically the *pañchatapas* was the worship of Sūrya (Sun-god). Sītā separated from Rāma resolves to undergo the *tapas* in which she would constantly look towards the sun, so that she is blessed with Rāma as her husband in the next birth also

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and there is no occassion for separation any more :

sāhaṁ tapaḥ sūryanivishṭadṛishṭi
rūrdhvaṁ prasūteścharituṁ yatishye |
bhūyo yathā me jananāntarepi
tvameva bhartā na cha viprayogaḥ ||
(*Raghuvaṁśa*, XIV, 66).

In the early medieval period Pārvatī so often finds representation on one of the outer *bhadra* niches of the temples in central India. She is depicted performing *pañchatapas* generally in standing posture and sometimes in seated position. In the *Kumārasaṁbhava* of Kālidāsa, the penance of Pārvatī is described in a great detail. When she could not win over Śiva by her devotion and physical charm and Kāma, the god of love, was reduced to ashes by Śiva in her very presence, she resorted to undergo severe penance in order to obtain him as her husband.[3] She started with ordinary observances which later turned into the austere *pañchatapas* when she placed herself in the middle of four burning fires at her four sides and constantly looked up towards the glowing sun which was so much scorching to her eyes :

śuchau chaturṇāṁ jvalatāṁ havirbhujāṁ
śuchismitā madhyagatā sumadhyamā |
vijitya netrapratighātinīṁ prabhāṁ
ananyadṛishṭiḥ savitāramaikshata ||
(*Kumārasaṁbhava*, V, 20).

Her *pañchatapas* is further high lighted in the following verse by saying that she heated herself extremely with various fires burning with fuel on her

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sides in addition to the hot sun shining above her in the sky :

nikāmataptā vividhena vahninā
nabhaścareṇendhanasaṁbhṛitena sā //
(*Kumārasaṁbhava*, V, 23).

With this literary and textual background of the practice of *pañchatapas* in general and in the case of Pārvatī in particular, let us study some of the sculptures of the goddess Pārvatī belonging to medieval period. Though this form of Pārvatī is not clearly described or identified in the iconographic texts but its sculptural illustrations exist in a large number and the above noted description of the *Kumārasaṁbhava* of Kālidāsa seems to be a literary source which inspired the devotees and sculptors of early medieval times, specially in central India, for the depiction of Pārvatī in *pañchatapas*.

In this connection a panel portraying Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* from Cave No. 21 at Ellora may be referred.[4] Here two-handed Pārvatī stands in *samabhaṅga* pose holding a rosary (*akshamālā*) in her right hand and a water vessel (*kamaṇḍalu*) in mutilated condition in her left one (Plate II). She wears a heavy coiffure on her head, an antelope skin (*mṛigacharma*) on her left shoulder and a lower garment falling down to her ankles. Her restraint ornamentation consists of a *hāra* (necklace) and *kaṅkaṇas* (bracelets). Near her feet four *agnikuṇḍas* (fire pots) are placed indicating that she is observing *pañchatapas* for propitiating Śiva. Her two maids, one kneeling in front of her with folded hands and the other standing to her left side with a box in her hands, are attending on her during penance. To her

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left is represented the figure of a Brahmachārin holding a water vessel in his left hand while his right hand with outstretched palm is in the attitude of talking to the goddess. The Brahmachārin represents Śiva in disguise who appeared before Pārvatī to test her devotion. Below the panel dwarfish Śiva-*gaṇas* are shown in various attitudes. The panel datable to cir. A.D. 600 may be seen as a back-ground to the images belonging to the early medieval period discussed later. Here Pārvatī is shown with a single pair of arms being an early example of the iconographic type and the four *agnikuṇḍas* are placed at the same level near her feet while in the images of later period she is invariably represented with four arms and the four *agnikuṇḍas* are shown at two levels.

In the temples of early medieval period of central India datable to 8th-9th centuries and assignable to the Pratīhāra period, the image of Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* is an object of frequent occurance. The temples at Naresar and Batesara in Morena District, Amrol in Gwalior District, Mahua and Terahi in Shivpuri District, Badoh—Pathari in Vidisha District and Indor in Guna District, represent Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* in its early form. She is invariably placed in the northern *bhadra rathikā* (central niche) and if the temple faces north allowing no room for the *bhadra rathikā* on that side, her position is shifted to the other side, either to the other *bhadra* niche of the temple as in the case of Kherāpatina Durgā shrine at Mahua (District Shivpuri) or to the *kapilī* (buffer wall joining the *garbhagṛiha* with the doorway or *maṇḍapa*) as in the case of the subsidiary shrine on

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the south-western corner of the *jagatī* of the Gadarmal Temple at Badoh (District Vidisha). In the Temple No. 22 at Naresar and the Bhuteshwara Temple at Batesara (both in Morena District), the goddess Pārvatī is carved in the seated position whereas in rest of the places she is shown in standing posture.

In the northern *bhadra* niche of the Temple No. 22 at Naresar she is portrayed seated on a low pedestal carved with three lotus petals with the left leg, bent as the knee, placed horizontally on the seat and her right leg bent and kept on the seat in vertical position (Plate III). Her ears are elongated and eyes half closed in meditation. On the neck, marked with three lines (*trivalī*), she wears a loose *ekāvalī* (single-stringed necklace) falling between her breasts. She is wearing a broad *yajñopavīta* running from her left shoulder to the right side of her waist which signifies the role of a *brahmachāriṇī*. The lower part of her body is clad with a loin cloth falling down to her ankles. She is seated, absorbed in meditation, in the middle of four burning fires kept in the pots (*agnikuṇḍas*). It is notable that in the description of *pañchatapas*, only four fires are mentioned, the fifth one being the sun itself in the sky which is counted to make the five fires (pañchāgni) giving the name to the *tapas*. The goddess bears *jaṭājūṭa* (lump of hair) tied with strings on her head shown against a halo (*prabhāmaṇḍala*) which is carved with lotus petals.[5] She holds an *akshamālā* (rosary) in her upper right hand, *kamaṇḍalu* (water pot) in her lower right hand and an indistinct mutilated object in her upper left hand which is most likely a sacrificial ladle

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(*sruvā*), whereas her lower right hand is broken. In the *Kumārasaṁbhava* Pārvatī is mentioned holding an *akshamālā* in her hand injured by *kuśa* grass :

kuśāṅkurādānaparikshatāṅguliḥ
kṛitokshasūtrapraṇayī tayā karaḥ // (V, 11)
samarpayantī sphaṭikākshamālikām (V, 63).

Her association with a *kamaṇḍalu* (water vessel) and *sruvā* (sacrificial ladle) is suggested by two words—'*kṛitābhishekām*' (one who has purified herself with water) and '*hutajātavedasām*' (one who has offered incense in the sacred fire) which interpret the purpose of her two attributes held in her two left hands :

kṛitābhishekāṁ hutajātavedasāṁ
tvaguttarāsaṅgavatīmadhītinīm/
(*Kumārasaṁbhava*, V, 16).

The identification of *sruvā* in her upper left hand is further suggested by the images of Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* from Batesara and Badoh described later where the sacrificial ladle (*sruvā*) in the corresponding hand is better preserved (Plates IV and XV). Beside her in the lower part of the panel, a lion is seated on her right side and two deer on the left side. Her association with lion as her mount is so commonly known in sculptures when she is portayed as the consort of Śiva or as Durgā or Mahishāsuramardinī. But the representation of deer with her requires some elucidation. In the *Kumārasaṁbhava* it is mentioned that during the course of her penance at a lonely peak of Himālaya, Pārvatī developed a close familiarity with the forest deer whom she used to feed sylvan corn with her

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own hands and at times compare her eyes to those of the deer sitting nearby :

araṇyabījāñjalidānalālitās
tathā cha tasyāṁ hariṇā viśasvasuḥ/
yathā tadīyairnayanaiḥ kutūhalāt
puraḥ sakhīnāmamimīta lochane//
(*Kumārasaṁbhava*, V, 15).

In the same context Śiva, disguished in the form of a *brahmachārin* to test the devotion of Pārvatī, enquired of her whether she was happy in the company of forest deer which affectionately took away sacrificial grass (*darbha*) from her hands and the swift movement of whose eyes was just like that of hers :

api prasannaṁ hariṇeshu te manaḥ
karasthadarbhapraṇayāpahārishu/
ya utpalākshi prachalairvilochanais-
tavākshisādṛishyamiva prayuñjate//
(*Kumārasaṁbhava*, V, 35).

In the *Raghuvaṁśa* the context of sage Sutikshṇa also emphasises the association of deer and *akshamālā* in connection with his *pañchatapas*. It is narrated that his right hand encircled with *akshamālā* (rosary) with which he greeted victorious Rāma returning from Laṅka was accustomed to caress the deer :

eshokshamālāvalayaṁ mṛigāṇāṁ
kaṇḍūyitāraṁ kuśasuchilāvaṁ/
sabhājane me bhujamūrdvabāhuḥ
savyetaraṁ prādhvamitaḥ prayuṅkte//
(*Raghuvaṁśa*, XIII, 43).

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Vasishṭha's hermitage was haunted with a number of deer seated either in the courtyard of the *āśrama* or at the entrance of the cottage.[6] These references sufficiently justify the presence of deer with Pārvatī in *pañchatapas*.[7] Moreover, due to her penance, the atmosphere of the place got sanctified and the natural enmity of living beings disappeared (*virodhisattvojjhitapūrvamatsaram*) in the forest where sacrificial fires were burning all the time :

virodhisattvojjhitapūrvamatsaraṁ
drumairabhīshṭaprasavārchitātithi/
navoṭajābhyantarasaṁbhṛitānalaṁ
tapovanaṁ tachcha babhūva pāvanam//
(*Kumārasaṁbhava*, V, 17).

This idea of the absence of natural enmity among living beings seems to be illustrated in the sculptural panel under discussion where creatures like the lion on one side and the deer on the other side of Pārvatī are carved in a very docile manner as if completely forgetting their natural behaviour in the presence of the other. Besides the iconographic significance, the figure is also remarkable for its simple but very suggestive treatment. Her slightly voluminous body combined with supple delineation of limbs, her oval face with *jaṭābhāra*, disposition of her legs and hands in notable ease, restraint drapery and ornamentation and the manner of portraying the animals as if they are conscious of the mental state of the goddess are some of the noteworthy features of the piece of sculpture datable to the early 8th century A.D.

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The Bhuteshwara Temple in Batesara valley (District Morena) contains an image of Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* in seated position (Plate IV). The four-handed image seated in *lalitāsana* on a lotus pedestal with a heavy *jaṭājūṭa* (lump of hair) on her head, wears a beaded necklace, a broad *yajñopavīta* (sacred thread) running from her left shoulder to the right side of her waist and a striped lower garment. As usual she carries *varadamudrā*, an *akshamālā* (rosary), *sruvā* (sacrificial ladle) and water vessel in her lower right, upper right, upper left and lower left hands respectively. The manner of holding *akshamālā* in her upper right hand is noteworthy. The *Kumārasaṁbhava* mentions that during her penance when she briefly talked to Śiva in the guise of a *brahmachārin* she put the rosary in the forepart of her hand whose fingers were closed in the shape of a bud :

athāgrahaste mukulīkṛitāṅgulau
samarpayantī sphaṭikākshamālikām|
kathañchidadrestanayā mitāksharaṁ
chiravyavasthapitavāgabhāshata||

(*Kumārasaṁbhava*, V, 63).

The sculpture under discussion seems to illustrate the same manner of holding *akshamālā* as given in the *Kumārasaṁbhava*. The four fires shown in the back ground and the two animals—a lion and a deer—flanking the pedestal of the goddess are carved as usual. The image is similar in representation to the seated image of Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* from Naresar with some minor variations like the different pose of sitting in *lalitāsana* with the left leg of the goddess resting below her seat and depiction

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of one deer on the left side of the pedestal instead of two. But in the style of portraiture and artistic quality it is much more decorative in detail and accentuated with her wide spread limbs in comparison to the one from Naresar.

An image of seated Pārvatī in the northern niche of a small temple at Batesara (District Morena) is noteworthy for its special treatment as well as a different iconographic representation (Plate V). In a plain pilastered niche the image is seated on a round pedestal resting on foliage which consists of the stem of lotuses. Beneath the pedestal a full-blossomed lotus flower and a couple of buds are carved. The face of a lion towards the right side of the goddess below her knee is depicted but on the other side the figure of a deer is absent contrary to the images described earlier. The four-handed goddess is seated here in a stiff yogic posture known as *utkuṭikāsana* with a *yogapaṭṭa* (cloth band) tied around the knees in order to keep them raised above the seat. As usual she has a gorgeous *jaṭābhāra* over her head and elongated ear lobes and wears an *ekāvalī* around her neck and probably ear ornaments. Her lower right hand is in *varadamudrā* whereas rest of the three hands clockwise hold *akshamālā* (rosary), *sruvā* (sacrificial ladle) and a pot. Here instead of four only two *agnikuṇḍas* (fire pots) are represented above the shoulders of the goddess. The image is a unique one in representation as it shows Pārvatī in *utkuṭika* pose which is a severe posture in comparision to the *lalitāsana* described earlier and indicates the firm determination of the goddess to win over Śiva as her husband. *Pañchatapas* aspect is symbolised only by two fire

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pots placed above the goddess which continued to remain an iconographic practice even in later centuries.

The other images of Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* from Naresar (District Morena) are represented on the northern *bhadra rathikās* (central niches) of Temples at present numbered as 18, 19, 20 and 23, but contrary to the images described above, all of them are shown in standing posture. Of them, the image that perhaps belonged to the Temple No. 19 representing Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* in a niche formed with plain pilasters is specially remarkable (Plate VI). Here the four-armed goddess stands on a lotus pedestal with a prominent *jaṭājūṭa* on her head, elongated ear lobes and an *ekāvalī* (single-stringed necklace) around the neck falling down through her breasts. Her lower right hand is in *varadamudrā* (boon giving attitude) and she holds a rosary (*akshamālā*) in her upper right hand, *sruvā* (sacrificial ladle) in her upper left hand and a *kamaṇḍalu* in the lower left one. The lower part of Pārvatī is covered with a loin cloth falling down to her ankles marked with a vertical line of pleats between her legs. On her right side the lion, with upraised forepart of its body and open mouth, intently looks towards the goddess and on her left side the standing deer gazes towards her. The two animals are carved in an active and spirited manner and are in contrast to the submissive animals depicted in the panel described earlier in the case of seated images. Here the animals are highly animated to correspond with the exerting goddess in *samabhaṅgasthānaka* (standing erect with equal weight on the two legs) pose. Of the four fires, three pots

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containing the flames are clearly visible, two on her upper side and the one behind her lower right hand. The contours of the image are well carved with the smooth vertical disposition of the body, flanked by drooping lower hands and upward thrust of the attending animals. Her thighs seem to illustrate the expression of Kālidāsa that the creator exhausted all his resources in making the round and not too heavy (*na chātidīrghe*) thighs of Pārvatī and he had to accumulate further resources with a great difficulty for completing the rest of her body.[8] The face of the image marked with a noble expression combined with a conspicuous *jaṭājūṭa* (lump of hair) reminds the corresponding description of the *Kumārasaṁbhava* where it is said that her face with *jaṭās* over the head did not loose the charm of earlier days when it used to be decorated with well arranged hair :

yathā prasiddhairmadhuraṁ śiroruhair-
jaṭābhirapyevamabhūttadānanam / (V, 9).

Like the earlier image this one is also datable to the 8th century A.D. The images discussed above combine in them the quality of physical perfection as well as the spirit of asceticism by their expression, attributes and surroundings. Seeing them one is necessarily reminded of the idea expressed by the Brahmachārin as soon as he witnessed Pārvatī engaged in the penance. With the beautiful form of Pārvatī and her severe penance the Brahmachārin became convinced that beauty always follows a righteous course :

yaduchyate Pārvati pāpavṛittaye
na rūpamityavyabhichāri tadvachaḥ /
(*Kumārasaṁbhava*, V, 36).

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The similar images in *pañchatapas* on the northern *bhadra* niches of Temples numbering 18, 20 and 23 at Naresar follow the same mode of representation as described earlier in the case of standing image from the site. Being small in size, corroded and mutilated, their details are not clearly visible, but they can be surely identified with their characteristic features like the flames of fire visible on the upper side and the remnant of two animals—the lion and the deer—usually accompanying the deity. Of these the image of Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* that exists on the northern *bhadra* niche of the *valabhī* type Temple numbered 20 is somewhat clearer (Plate VII).

The Rameshwara Temple and Danebaba Temple at Amrol (District Gwalior) with their badly mutilated images of Pārvatī (Plates VIII-XI), the Śiva Temple at Terahi and Śiva *maṇḍapikā* at Sesai (District Shivpuri) (Plate XII) and the Gargaja Mahādeva Temple at Indor (District Guna), all in the State of Madhya Pradesh, represent standing Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* in their northern *bhadra* niches. In the Chaturbhuja Temple at Gwalior Fort, the image of Pārvatī occupies the position on the *kumbha* portion of the northern *bhadra* and in the Kherāpatina Durgā shrine at Mahua (District Shivpuri) Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* has been placed in the western *bhadra* niche. The fact of this deviation in her placement in the case of latter two temples is noteworthy. The Kherāpatina Durgā shrine faces north and hence there is no room for a northern *bhadra* niche which could have accommodated Pārvatī in her usual direction. But her representation on the *kumbha* portion of the *adhishṭhāna* of the Chaturbhuja Temple dedicated to Vishṇu is indica-

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tive of the fact that Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* is given central place on the northern side only in the case of Śaiva or Śākta temples.

In the temples and shrines of Badoh-Pathari (District Vidisha) Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* is an oft-recurring feature. In the northern *bhadra* niches of the three shrines belonging to the group of shrines known as Satamaḍhī at Badoh, she is carved within plain pilastered niches. Another shrine, situated to the south-west of the group of temples known as Daśāvatāra, represents the goddess in usual standing posture. A large number of loose architectural members, which originally formed the *jaṅghā* portion of small shrines, containing Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* in the simple niches surmounted with decorated *udgamas* (pediments) have been noticed in the monuments of the two villages. In the Jain group of temples at Badoh, where the whole enclosure wall and *śikharas* of the temples betray of a restoration of much later or even recent times, the goddess Pārvatī is found in her early characteristic features alongwith other associated deities. In a portion of the restored enclosure wall her image in *pañchatapas* is fixed alongwith its contemporary standing images of Sūrya and Gaṇeśa beside the doorjambs, all of which perhaps belonged to the same shrine (Plate XIII). On the western slope of Ganjanath hill in Pathari, in front of a natural cave known as Guphā Mandir, lie a number of architectural and sculptural remains belonging to ancient temples including at least three pedimented niches, each one of them bearing a four-handed standing Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* in the middle of four flames flanked with a deer and a lion (Plate XIV). These

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niches must have occupied the position on the outer *bhadras* of the shrines as noted in a number of shrines located in the area. On the walls of the subsidiary shrines located at the north-east and south-west corners of the *jagatī* of the Gadarmal Temple at Badoh (District Vidisha) Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* finds representation.

Another image of the goddess carved in a framed niche in the premises of the Gadarmal Temple is specially noteworthy for some deviation from her usual depiction and represents a different iconographic variety of Pārvatī in *pañchatapas*. In this case the four-handed goddess Pārvatī stands in the *samabhaṅga* pose (Plate XV), holding in hands her usual attributes as noted in the standing images from Naresar. Her lower right hand is in *varadamudrā* and the upper right hand in the pose of either holding a rosary or in *chinamudrā* indicating contemplation. In her upper left hand she holds a *sruvā* (sacrificial ladle) and in lower left hand a *kamaṇḍalu*. With a bulky *jaṭājūṭa* (lump of hair) on her head decorated with *lalāṭikā* ornament on her forehead, having elongated ears, she wears a round neck ornament, long *yajñopavīta* and tight fitting lower garment. The four burning fires, kept in pots and carved behind each of the four hands, indicate her *pañchatapas* aspect. In this case, flanking figures of lion and deer beside her legs are conspicuously absent and in their places two plants, appearing like small plantain (*kadalī*) trees, are represented which were perhaps nourished by Pārvatī during the course of her penance as described in the *Kumārasaṁbhava*. Pārvatī's maid, while stressing on the long duration of her penance, tells

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Śiva disguised as Brahmachārin that Pārvatī planted a number of trees long back during her childhood. Those plants grew up to become full grown trees and bear fruits. They also witnessed the severe penance of Pārvatī through all her ordeals. But, she says, Pārvatī's desire to gain Śiva as her husband has not shown a sign of fulfilment even after such a long time in spite of her best efforts :

drumeshu sakhyā kṛitajanmasu svayaṁ
phalaṁ tapaḥ sākshishu dṛishṭameshvapi |
na cha prarohābhimukhopi dṛishyate
manorathosyāḥ śaśimaulisṁśrayaḥ ||

(*Kumārasaṁbhava*, V, 60).

Her association with plants is further pointed out in the description that she nourished the plants by watering them herself. She treated the plants of the hermitage like her own sons and had a great affection for them like a real mother. As a mother looks after her issues and offers them milk from her own breasts in the same way Pārvatī watered plants with the pitchers as if they were her own breasts to feed the off-springs. Her motherly affection for the plants was so great that even after the birth of her own son, Kārttikeya, she did not loose it and continued to treat them with due attention of a mother :

atandritā sā svayameva vṛikshakān
ghaṭastanaprasravaṇairvyavardhayat |
guhopi yeshāṁ prathamāptajanmanāṁ
na putravātsalyamapākarishyati ||

(*Kumārasaṁbhava*, V, 14).

The image from the Gadarmal Temple under discussion may be dated to the 9th century A.D.

An image of Pārvatī from Deogarh, District

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Lalitpur, U.P., carved in a pedimented niche is very much like the one described above. The goddess standing in a plain pilastered niche bears *varada-mudrā* in her lower right hand and holds a *kamaṇḍalu* (water pot) in lower left one, the attributes in the two upper hands being indistinct due to mutilated condition of the sculpture (Plate XVI). The elongated *jaṭābhāra* is similarly decorated with a central ornament encased within a raised border. The upper part of the body of the goddess is unclad as usual like other figures and traces of fire pots (*agnikuṇḍas*) are visible in the back ground of the upper hands. Pārvatī is conspicuously flanked here by two small trees or plants, one on the either side of her lower part, which indicate her close association with plants during the course of her penance. The sculpture is datable to the 9th century A.D. This image is housed in the sculpture shed of the Archaeological Survey of India at Deogarh and has been secured from the adjacent area on the other side of the road in front of the sculpture shed. Remains of ancient temples can still be seen on the spot from where the goddess has been restored which point out that the area was well occupied by temple building activity even in early medieval period. Architectural and sculptural activity during early medieval period is evident from a large number of Jain temples extant on the hill at Deogarh and the presence of an inscription dated in Samvat 919 (A.D. 862) of the time of Bhojadeva of Pratihāra dynasty of Kanauj, leaves no doubt that the site continued to be a repository of artistic creations right from the Gupta period onwards. The image under discussion makes it evident that in the medieval period Deogarh

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sustained to have Hindu temples alongwith a prolific growth of Jain temples and images.

The image of Pārvatī encountered recently in the excavation at Antichak, District Bhagalpur, Bihar, is specially noteworthy as far as the motif of representing small trees flanking the goddess is concerned.[9] Here also the four-handed goddess with *jaṭābhāra* on her head stands in a plain pilastered niche below a mutilated *udgama* (pediment) suggesting thereby that it formed part of the architectural scheme of a shrine. As usual the upper part of her body is unclad in contrast to the lower part draped with a lower garment secured with a waist band. Her three hands carry usual attributes, *i.e. varadamudrā* in the lower right, a twig in the upper left and a pot in the lower left hand, the major variation being a sword (*khaḍga*) held in the upper right hand of the goddess. Two trees with long leaves are clearly shown flanking the goddess on her lower side as in the case of images from the Gadarmal Temple, Badoh and Deogarh already described. The image from Antichak is datable to the 9th century A.D.

On the southern side of the main doorway of the Śiva Temple at Kansua (District Kota, Rajasthan), dated by an inscription in A.D. 738, a standing image of Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* is installed in a niche which represents one of the early images of this group (Plate XVII). The image is very much corroded but the four-handed goddess can be identified with the remnant of *agnikuṇḍas* on both the sides above her lower hands and prominent *jaṭābhāra*. Her lower right hand is in *varada* pose, upper right hand holds a rosary and lower left one

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a pot, while the attribute in upper left hand is mutilated beyond recognition. The image seems to be similar to those encountered in the districts of Morena and Gwalior, not far away from the find spot of this image. Obviously, this image is not in its original position and is likely to have been installed in the present position later on at the time of the renovation of the front portion of the temple at Kansua.

The image of Pārvatī installed in the northern *garbhagṛiha* of the triple-shrined temple at Menal (District Chittaurgarh, Rajasthan) is an interesting specimen of the goddess (Plate XVIII). The goddess stands on a lotus pedestal resting on a *godhā* (alligator) which is flanked by a lion on the right side and a deer (?) on the left. The goddess wears a striped lower garment, a broad *yajñopavīta* (sacred thread), single-stringed pearl necklace and a heavy two-tiered *jaṭājūṭa* with the curls of hair falling on the shoulders. In the background of her head is a *prabhāmaṇḍāla* carved with lotus petals as in similar other images referred to earlier. All the four hands of the goddess are broken which might have held usual attributes. On the top of the image a row of *navagrahas* is carved with a Śivaliṅga in the last. The other representations with the goddess include a couple of flying *vidyādharas* in the clouds on either side of the *prabhāmaṇḍala* below which Brahmā and a Śivaliṅga under worship are shown on her right side and Garuḍāsīna Vishṇu and Gaṇeśa on her left side. On the lower side a couple of female attendants, garlands bearers and seated *ṛishi* are shown on either side to offer their services and homage to the goddess in penance. Here the trees,

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one on each side of Pārvatī, are clearly shown with their large leaves suggesting them to be *kadalī-vṛiksha* (plantain trees). The two *agnikuṇḍas* (fire pots) near her shoulders are chipped off but their impressions are still visible in the image. The other two *agnikuṇḍas* (fire pots) are intact on the lower side with the goddess and can be seen just above the leaves of the trees. The image represents Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* and is datable to the 9th cent A.D. The presence of *navagrahas*, *vidyādharas*, Hindu trinity with Gaṇeśa and a number of attendant figures make the image more illustrative and the simplicity and direct appeal of the theme as portrayed in earlier images is lost to some extent, though the central figure of Pārvatī is as forcefully portrayed as ever. The prominent *jaṭājūṭa* on the head of the goddess is interestingly shown with the tresses of loose hair falling on both of her shoulders near the ears. The ears of the goddess are devoid of ornaments which remind the expression of Kālidāsa about Pārvatī. Śiva, disguised as a Brahmachārin, is specially pained to see the face of Pārvatī with the ears bereft of floral ornamentaion for a long time and loose locks of hair falling over her cheeks :

aho sthiraḥ kopi tavepsito yuvā
chirāya karṇotpalaśunyatāṁ gate |
upekshate yaḥ ślathalambinīrjaṭāḥ
kapoladeśe kalamāgrapiṅgalāḥ ||
(*Kumārasaṁbhava*, V, 47).

A large number of images of Pārvatī from Hingalajgarh (District Mandsaur, M.P.) acquired in the collection of the Indore Museum, Indore, are remarkable for the study of Pārvatī in *pañchatapas*.

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There are several types of this aspect of the goddess in the collection with minor variations, though all of them hail from one and the same site. A four-armed image of Pārvatī stands on the lotus seat resting on the back of a *godhā* (alligator) (Plate XIX). Contrary to the other images described earlier, the goddess is richly ornamented with a broad necklace, beaded *hāra*, *kuṇḍalas* (ear ornaments), armlets, bracelets, anklets, *mekhalā* (girdle) with pearl loops (*muktāvalī*) falling on the thighs and a long thick garland hanging below the knees of the goddess. The head is covered with a tastefully decorated *jaṭābhāra* with the back ground of a *prabhāmaṇḍala* carved with a single band of lotus petals. The lower part of her body is clad with a lower garment suspended from her waist but the upper portion is uncovered. Out of her four hands three are broken off, the only preserved lower right one bears *varadamudrā* and holds a rosary (*akshamālā*). The upper left hand seems to hold a lotus flower, the remains of which are still visible. She is attended by a pair of female figures on each side near her feet; out of these the seated figure on the right side holding a ladle in her right hand represents Annapūrṇā while seated figure on the left side is holding a garland. The standing female figures carry *chaurīs* (fly whisks) to attend to the goddess. Just above the attendants four burning fires in pots (*agnikuṇḍas*), two on each side, are represented which undoubtedly indicate the *pañchatapas* aspect of Pārvatī. On the upper corners, four-handed seated Śiva is carved on the right and similarly Gaṇeśa on the corresponding left side of the goddess. At the top two-handed Kārttikeya is seated with a

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spear (*śakti*) in his right hand and cock (*kukkuṭa*) in the left one. Out of his six heads (*Shaḍānana*) only three are visible on the front side.

Another image of Pārvatī or Gaurī standing on a lotus flower resting on a figure of *goḍhā* (alligator) from Hingalajgarh is lavishly ornamented with a broad flat necklace, stringed-hāra and a pendant suspended from the necklace by means of double strings passing in between the breasts (Plate XX). Other ornaments include *kuṇḍalas* (ear ornaments), armlets, double bracelets, anklets, girdle (*mekhalā*) with two prominent loops falling on the thighs and a huge floral garland falling below the knees. The *jaṭābhāra* on her head is decorated with pearl strings so profusely that, except the uppermost portion, the *jaṭābhāra* is almost covered with it. The oval *prabhāmaṇḍala* is marked with a band of raised border decorated with a beaded line in the centre. The two upper hands of the goddess are broken off but the two lower hands hold *akshamālā* with *varadamudrā* in her right and an elongated water-vessel in the left one. Her mutilated left hand held the lotus flower whose remains are still visible near the figure of Gaṇeśa. She is attendent by a pair of female *chauri*-bearers on each side who are like-wise profusely ornamented. The most remarkable feature of the image is that the four fires (*agnis*), which highlight the *pañchatapas* aspect of the goddess, are represented seated in human form with their heads tilted towards the goddess. Behind the heads of the four fires, radiating flames are carved which leave no doubt in their identification. The *agnis* are seated in easy posture on pedestals with their right hand in the pose of holding rosary and left one

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holding a water-vessel (*kamaṇḍalu*). Above the four fires seated images of Śiva and Gaṇeśa are placed on the right and left sides of the goddess respectively. At the top a couple of garland bearing *vidyādharas* is represented on each side. Artistically the figure is more ornamented in comparison to the earlier images which is a speciality of medieval sculptures from the 10th century onwards. A rare expression of serenity on the countenance of the goddess, absorbed in meditation and at the same time observing severe penance of *pañchatapas* standing between the four fires on her four sides and the sun above in the sky, is particularly remarkable. The inclination of the heads of four fires towards the goddess suggests that the intensity of heat is directed towards her but the goddess, being oblivious of all physical discomfort, is engrossed in her *pañchatapas*.

The other standing image of Pārvatī from Hingalajgarh standing on a pedestal resting on the back of a *godhā* (alligator) is quite interesting as it adds some new features (Plate XXI). The goddess is richly decorated as usual with *kuṇḍalas*, necklace, beaded multi-stringed *hāra*, armlets, bracelets, *mekhalā* (girdle) embellished with loops on either side and anklets with a huge garland running over all. Both of her left hands are mutilated but the two hands on her right side are intact and hold a rosary with *varadamudrā* in the lower hand and a *sruvā* (sacrificial spoon) in the upper one. Her head bearing profusely ornamented *jaṭābhāra* has a halo in the back ground. The goddess is attended by three female figures on each side near her feet, the two nearer the goddess being in seated position. The

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seated figure on the right side represents Annapūrṇā holding a ladle in her right hand while that on the left side is holding a garland. One of the standing female attendants on her right side holds a bunch of lotus flowers with stalks. Above the attendant figures the four *agnis* are represented in human form with the blazing flames behind their heads. The two-handed *agnis* are seated in *lalitāsana* with their right hands in the pose holding a rosary and left hands holding a water-vessel as is the usual mode of representing the fire-god.[10] Above the figures of *agnis* mutilated Śiva seated in *lalītāsana* on the right side and Gaṇeśa on the left side of Pārvatī in the same position are carved. At the top of the panel just above the head of the goddess two-handed *Lakulīśa* is seated in *padamāsana* holding the staff in his left hand and showing the mark of *ūrdhvaliṅga*. Lakulīśa is flanked on a slightly lower level by eight of the *navagrahas* (nine planets) of which the first on the right corner holding lotuses in both the hands is Sūrya (Sun god) and the last one on the other side can be recognised as Rāhu with his hands in the *tarpaṇamudrā*. The representation of only eight of the *navagrahas* is not unusual in earlier period as Ketu was a later addition in the iconographic scheme of such panels.[11] On both the outer sides of the panel a *siṁhaśārdūla* resting on the head of an elephant (*gajamuṇḍa*), is shown which is surmounted with a *makaramukha* (crocodile head) on each side. The representation of four *agnis* on the four sides of the goddess leave no doubt in identifying her as Pārvatī in *pañchatapas*. Further the presence of Lakulīśa at the top of the panel makes it clearly associable to Pāśupata cult

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propagated by Lakulīśa which was very popular during medieval period.[12] Śiva and Gaṇeśa are represented here as inseparable family deities of the goddess.

The headless image of Pārvatī from Hingalajgarh standing between two *agnikuṇḍas* shows seated figures of Brahmā and Śiva flanking the halo on the right and left sides of the goddess respectively (Plate XXII). The image is well-ornamented like other images from the site. In the hands she holds her usual attributes *i.e.* rosary with *varada* pose, *sruvā* and *kamaṇḍalu* while the upper left hand is mutilated. On her lower right side goddess Annapūrṇā, holding a ladle in her right hand and bell in the left one, is kneeling near the feet, while on the left side a female garland bearer is carved in the same position. Kārttikeya with spear in his left hand and Gaṇeśa with *paraśu* (axe) in his right hand stand on the outer right and left sides of Pārvatī respectively.

The other badly mutilated image of Pārvatī from the same place, decorated with usual ornaments, holds rosary with *varada* pose in her lower right hand while the other three hands are mutilated. The image is remarkable for some of its iconographic features. Here Pārvatī observing *pañchatapas* stands on one leg only which suggests the observance of more severe penance (Plate XXIII). The goddess stands on her left leg while the right one is bent at the knee and turned upwards to touch the upper part of her left thigh. At the top of the panel Sūrya (Sun god) is seated holding lotus stalks in both of his hands flanked by garland bearing *vidyādharas* one on each side. Four *agnikuṇḍas* are shown beside the arms of the goddess to indicate

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the *pañchatapas* aspect. The presence of Sūrya as the main god at the top of the panel points out that the Sun god represents the fifth source of heat in addition to the four fire pots carved below. In the images of Pārvatī observing *pañchatapas* the Sun god is rarely represented though his presence is presumed in the sky. As described earlier, a devotee observing *pañchatapas* stands amidst four burning fires and is supposed to gaze constantly upon the Sun god in the sky.

The image of Pārvatī standing on a lotus seat resting on the back of *godhā* is richly ornamented with ear ornaments, multiple necklaces, armlets, girdle with pearl loops and *jaṭābhāra* on her head carved against the background of a *prabhāmaṇḍala* (Plate XXIV). Beside the *prabhāmaṇḍala*, Śiva is shown on the right side and Gaṇeśa on the left as in some other images hailing from Hingalajgarh described earlier. The important trait of this image is the representation of seven mother-goddesses (*saptamāṭṛikās*) with Pārvatī. On the top of the panel only five mother-goddesses, *i.e.* Vārāhi, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Brāhmī and Chāmuṇḍā are carved whereas the remaining two mother-goddesses—Vaishṇavī and Indrāṇī—are represented below the figures of Śiva and Gaṇeśa on the right and the left sides respectively. Just above the figures of Vaishṇavī and Indrāṇī *agnikuṇḍas*, one on each side, are shown to represent the *pañchāgni*. Near her feet three female attendants on each side are carved, the closest one on the right side of the goddess representing Annapūrṇā holding a ladle in her right hand and a bell in the left.

Another four-handed image of Pārvatī from

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Hingalajgarh standing on a pedestal on the back of a *godhā* (alligator) is iconographically quite similar to the image of Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* described just above (Plate XXV). Here the goddess wears the same ornaments and in addition has also a *kucha-bandha* (breast band) tied around her breasts of which we have not come across in the images so far described. Her hands hold the same objects as are noticed in the other images from Hingalajgarh already commented upon. The major difference in this image of Pārvatī and other images noted above is the absence of four burning fires in any form whatsoever. The usual position of four fires is occupied by two four-handed Rudra images in sitting posture, one on each side, holding a trident and a snake in their upper hands. Another remarkable feature of this image is the representation of eleven Rudras (*Ekādaśarudra*) alongwith Pārvatī. Nine Rudras are carved in a row at the top over the head of Pārvatī while the remaining two are placed at the level of her waist, one on either side. On the lower side she is attended by standing female figures, three on either side, holding *chaurīs* or lotus stalks. It seems that this image represents Gaurī as the consort of Śiva as presented in the *Aparājitapṛi-chchhā* according to which the image of Gaurī is to be surmounted on a *godhā*.

The images from Hingalajgarh (District Mandsaur) as well as the image of Pārvatī from Menal (District Chittaurgarh) (Plates XVIII-XXV) are notable for a few distinguishing features with which we do not come across in the group of images described earlier to them. Firstly, these images have under their lotus seat a *godhā* (alligator) which is a

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characteristic of Gaurī *i.e.* Pārvatī :

godhāsanābhaved Gaurī lalīyā haṁsa vāhanā /
(*Aparājitapṛichchā, 222, 37*; *and Rūpamaṇḍana*, V, 38).

Further the image of Gaurī, holding in her hands a rosary (*akshamālā*), lotus (*padma*), pose of protection (*abhayamudrā*) and offering of boons (*varadamudrā*) and placed on the pedestal of an alligator (*godhikā*) is specially recommended for worship in the houses as they bestow prosperity to the worshipper :

akshapadmābhayavaraṁ godhikāsanasaṁsthitā /
śriyāmūrtistu tannāma grihe pūjyā śriye sadā //
(*Aparājitapṛichchhā*, 222, 12).

The same idea is repeated in the *Rūpamaṇḍana* :

akshasūtraṁ tathā padmamabhayaṁ cha varam tathā /
godhāsanāpriyā mūrtirgṛihe pūjyā śriye sadā //
(*Rūpamaṇḍana*, V, 4).

So these images of Pārvatī must have been popularly worshipped in the regions of their origin. Secondly, the images under discussion have also the representation of Śiva and Gaṇeśa and sometimes Kārttikeya also to suggest their close affiliation with Śiva's family. In the image from Menal, Brahmā and Vishṇu also are represented in addition to Śiva and Gaṇeśa to complete the presence of Hindu trinity. Thirdly, a group of female attendants is introduced in all the images near the feet of the goddess in the place of lion and deer or small trees generally represented in the earlier images from Central India. In the images

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from Hingalajgarh, goddess Annapūrṇā is generally represented on the lower right side of Pārvatī to suggest her efficacy for plenty and prosperity. The earlier practice of representing the lion and deer very close to the goddess and small trees is sustained in the image from Menal (Plate XVIII) and this practice is later on altogether dropped in the images from Hingalajgarh as already noted.

The images of Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* studied in the previous pages fall into two broad categories. The first and earlier category consists of those hailing from the Districts of Morena, Gwalior, Guna, Shivpuri and Vidisha of Madhya Pradesh and District Lalitpur of Uttar Pradesh while the second category represents the images from Hingalajgarh (District Mandsaur, M.P.) and Menal (District Chittaur, Rajasthan). In the former category there are images of Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* both seated and standing, datable to the 8th and 9th centuries A.D. These images, very simple in nature and direct in appeal, represent the goddess amidst four firepots and flanked by a deer and a lion near her feet. Other divinities are not shown near her. In the latter category of images datable to the 10th and 11th centruries A.D., Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* is shown with a number of female attendants, Śiva, Gaṇeśa, Kārttikeya, Sūrya, Lakuliśa, *saptamātrikās* and *navagrahas* etc. On the pedestal, a figure of *godhā* (alligator) is invariably shown. Except the Pārvatī image from Menal which retains the simplicity and restraint in ornamentation of earlier images, all the images of second group hailing from Hingalajgarh are lavishly ornamented, a characteristic of late medleval sculptures. The four fires, shown either in pots

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or carved in human form, continue their presence to designate the *pañchatapas* of Pārvatī, which are eliminated in some later images (Plates XXIV-XXV).

An interesting image of Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* has been noticed from Buchkala (District Jodhpur) where two important temples of Pratihāra period are located. One of the two temples known as Pārvatī temple facing west is dated in A.D. 815 by an inscription of the time of Nāgabhaṭa II of Pratihāra dynasty. The other temple, known as the Śiva Temple, facing east contains the image of Pārvatī under reference in its western *bhadra* niche. The four-handed mutilated image of Pārvatī stands on a pedestal flanked by attendants, one on each side (Plate XXVI). She wears usual ornaments, some of which like necklace and armlets are visible on the upper half unclad body of the goddess, while the lower part of her body is clad with a lower garment secured in position by means of a girdle. Upper portion of head with *jaṭābhāra* is mutilated but the locks of hair falling on her shoulders with ear ornaments are still traceable. The lower pair of hands is missing now but in her upper right hand she holds a flower and an indistinct object in the upper left one. The four *agnikuṇḍas* (fire pots) are clearly indicated with flames issuing from them, two on each side of the goddess, suggesting the *pañcha-tapas* aspect. Just above her upper hands a Śivaliṅga is shown on the right side and an image of seated Gaṇeśa on the left. Here Śiva is shown in *liṅga* form and not in human form as in the case of images from Hingalajgarh described earlier. Another point which is remarkable in the case of this image is its

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location on the western *bhadra* niche. It may be recalled here that all the images so far noticed *in situ* in the niches of the temples of Madhya Pradesh are invariably represented in the northern *bhadra* niche if a niche is provided at all in that direction. But in the Śiva Temple at Buchkala, the goddess is uniquely shown in the western *bhadra* niche, and her usual position in the north is occupied by an image of Harihara.

The two images of Pārvatī from Chittaurgarh, Rajasthan, are specially noteworthy for their unique representation. In both the images Pārvatī is shown in *pañchatapas* and is clearly signified by the four burning fires. In these images carved in relief, the goddess is shown standing on the back of *godhā* (alligator). Curiously enough, the four handed goddess stands on her left leg while her right one is folded at the knee to give support to the left leg which is firmly placed on the *godhā* (Plate XXVII). Her lower right hand is in *varadamudrā* and the lower left one holds a *kamaṇḍalu* (sacrificial pot). The remaining two upper hands hold a long rosary or garland raised over her head decorated with ornamented *jaṭābhāra*. As usual the upper part of her body is unclad and wears necklace, armlets, bracelets etc. while the lower part is clad with waist cloth secured with a girdle (*mekhalā*). Near her feet two female attendants, one of each side, are shown with folded hands behind whom another larger female figure is seated on each side. The four *agnikuṇḍas* with burning flames are shown near the hands of the goddess. Between the upper and lower *agnikuṇḍas* a Śivaliṅga is represented on the right side and the image of seated Gaṇeśa on the left.

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Beside the Śivaliṅga a dancing *gaṇa* is carved and on the left of the figure of Gaṇeśa a seated two-handed female divinity is represented. The whole atmosphere of the panel depicts a *tapovana* where Pārvatī performed the severe penance of *pañchatapas* standing on one leg. The image is datable to the 9th century A.D.

The other image of Pārvatī noted from Chittaurgarh is fixed in the compound wall on the north-west side of the Ratneshwara Temple at the fort. The four-handed image standing on one leg on the back of *godhā* (alligator) (Plate XXVIII) is very much in the same manner as the other image from Chittaurgarh described just above. Here also the goddess stands on her left leg and holds a long garland or rosary in her two upraised hands above her head bearing an ornamented *jaṭābhāra*. Her lower right hand is in *varadamudrā* and the lower left one carries a sacrificial pot. She is attended by two female figures with folded hands near her feet. Above them four *agnikuṇḍas* with flames, two on each side, are carved clearly to indicate the *pañchatapas* of Pārvatī. On her right side Vīrabhadra, the representative of Śiva is carved and on the left side seated Gaṇeśa is represented.

Both these images of Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* from Chittaurgarh are distinguishable for two characteristics. Firstly, they are shown standing on one leg only which makes the penance still difficult to perform. This mode of standing of the goddess has been noticed earlier in an image from Hingalajgarh as well. Secondly, the two upper hands hold the elongated rosary or garland raised up above the head of the goddess. The first characteristic is

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suggested in the *Kumārasaṁbhava*. When Pārvatī realised that it would not be possible to achieve her aim by undergoing ordinary observances, she started severe penance in complete disregard of her tender body. She put her body to extreme test and standing on one leg may be one of the ways of utmost physical exertion :

yadā phalaṁ pūrvatapaḥ samādhinā
na tāvatā labhyamamaṁsta kāṅkshitam|
tadānapekshya svaśarīramārdavam
tapo mahatsā charituṁ prachakrame||
(*Kumārasaṁbhava*, V, 18).

The second characteristic of the two images of Pārvatī from Chittaurgarh *i.e.* holding a long rosary or garland in her upper hands, finds its mention in the literary references. In the *Raghuvaṁśa* it is mentioned that ascetic Sutīkshṇa was engaged in the *pañchatapas* amidst four blazing fires under the sun. But when the chariot of Rāma passed over his hermitage, he saluted Rāma by raising her hand carrying an *akshamālā* :

sabhājane me bhujamūrdvabāhuḥ
savyetaraṁ prādhvamitaḥ prayuṅkte|
(*Raghuvaṁśa*, XIII, 43).

In this case Pārvatī seems to be saluting to Sūrya (Sun god) by raising up two upper hands holding a rosary, as the Sun god is the major god to whom worship is offered in the *pañchatapas*. Thus it is a natural pose to greet the sun in the sky with a rosary or garland. The ascetics in severe penance used to make the gesture of raising up two hands holding a rosary over the head. A Śaiva deity from

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Saheth-Maheth now preserved in the State Museum, Lucknow, datable to Gupta period is similarly represented holding a long rosary (*akshamālā*) in his two upper hands raised over his head with *jaṭābhāra* and emaciated body showing the great austerity of the deity (Plate XXIX).[13] The practice of holding floral garlands with upraised hands by the deities over their head is not unknown even in the classical period and the well-known images of Mahishāsuramardinī from Caves No. 6 and 17 at Udaigiri (District Vidisha), which hold a bunch of garlands in their two upraised hands over their head, are the illustration of this practice in the 5th Century A.D. In the same way, a fragment of the figure of an ascetic encountered in the excavation at Mandor (District Jodhpur) and datable to cir. 9th century A.D. represents him holding with both of his hands a beaded rosary over his head to greet the Sun-god.[14] The mode of standing on the left leg and gazing at the sun with upraised joined hands to greet the Sun-god is magnificently represented in the well-known *Gaṅgāvataraṇa* panel from Mahabalipuram datable to the Pallava period where an ascetic standing on the bank of Gaṅgā is busy in severe penance in the similar way.

In this regard a figure of Pārvatī undergoing severe penance in a basrelief in the Cave No. 1 at Badami may be referred to for similar representation.[15] In this basrelief Pārvatī stands on her right leg with the left one folded at the knee to give support to the former. Both of her hands are raised up in *ūrdvabāhu* pose in the adoration of Sun-god as in the two Pārvatī images from Chittaurgarh noted above. To her left is carved the figure of a dwarfish

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Brahmachārin holding an umbrella in his left hand and talking to Pārvatī with the palm of his right hand extended towards the goddess. The Brahmachārin is Śiva himself in disguise to test the devotion of Pārvatī. The *Kumārasaṁbhava* mentions that Śiva appeared before penancing Pārvatī in the form of a young Brahmachārin holding a staff of *palāśa* wood (*āshāḍhadharaḥ*, V, 30) in his hand. But in the basrelief under reference Śiva is holding an umbrella in place on a staff which reminds us the representation of the Vāmana incarnation of Vishṇu. The staff and umbrella may be taken here as interchangeable attributes of a Brahmachārin.

The temples and architectural remains containing the images of Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* as described above, belong mostly to the Pratīhāra period and are datable between 8th and 10th centuries A.D. This fact leads us to the conclusion that this theme was a very favourite one in central India during Pratīhāra period like the themes of Kārttikeya, Sūrya and Gaṇeśa who commonly find prominent place in the *bhadra* (central) niches of the temples.

Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* is found in other regions and mediums as well. One bronze image of Pārvatī from Nalanda reproduced by J.N. Banerjea in 'The Development of Hindu Iconography' and noticed by him in detail requires re-examination for its identification. He describes the image, "The three-eyed and four-armed Devī stands in the *samapādasthānaka* pose, holding in three of her hands a rosary, a hooked staff (triśikhā ?) and a water-vessel (*bhṛṅgāra*); there is a creeping iguana near her right leg, and her lion mount and another

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horned animal (a buffalo ?) are shown on the lower section of the pedestal. Heaped *naivedya* (offering) pots are shown on four corners of the pedestal, and the sun and the moon are placed on either side of the very beautiful and elaborately designed *śiraschakra* (Pl. XLIII, Fig. 2)."[26] The four-armed goddess with *jatājūṭa* on her head, elongated ornamented ears, minute traces of neck ornament and *yajñopavīta* and lower garment secured with a girdle, stands on a pedestal. The rosary in her upper right hand and the water-vessel in her lower left hand are clearly shown but the upper left hand holds an object which appears to be a twig and her mutilated palm of the lower right hand might have been in the *varadamudrā* as in the case of similar other images noted earlier. The objects on four corners of the pedestal described by Banerjea as heaped *naivedya* (offering) pots, actually represent the four burning fires which, added to the sun, go to make five fires as required in the *pañchatapas*. The horned animal on the left side on the elevation of the pedestal, which has been suspected to be a buffalo represents a deer as evident from several sculptures already described. Thus the bronze figure in question represents Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* with her *godhāsanā* (having an alligator as her mount) aspect added to it.[17]

Another stone images of Pārvatī of an unknown provenance datable to the 9th century A.D. is notable in the collection of the Allahabad Museum, Allahabad.[18] The lower part of the image from the waist down to the ankles is completely missing and all the four hands are also broken. The image has rightly been indentified as 'Pārvatī *pañcāgnitapa*',

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Certain points, not noted in this image, need to be noticed here in the light of the images already described. The *jaṭājūṭa* on her head and her ornaments are more decorative in comparison to the images of earlier group. This image is surrounded with a profuse sculptural setting to illustrate the theme elaborately. Here the goddess stands in the middle of four fires, the remnant of which are visible above her shoulders and above the heads of her female attendants on both the sides. It is curious to note here the emaciated and bent figures of sages pouring oblations in the four burning fires with a *sruvā* (sacrificial ladle) in their right hand and shallow pot in the left one. A pair of sages is shown over each of the two upper fire altars and a single sage over the lower ones. No attributes in the hands of the goddess are preserved except a portion of the sacrificial ladle (*sruvā*) in front of the fire altar over her left shoulder, which was held in her upper left hand as in the case of other similar images already described. In the image the identification of the pointed objected at the top flanked by the flying *vidyādharas* as the "fifth fire altar" is not correct. According to the textual references, the fifth source of heat in the *pañchatapas* is the sun itself and this prescription is supported by the sculptural evidence so far noted where the fifth fire is not found. When the fifth source of heat is to be shown it is represented by the presence of *Sūrya* himself seated above the head of Pārvatī as illustrated in Plate XXIII. The pointed object at the top seems to be a finial on the top of a broken umbrella over the head of the goddess. The two animals, one on each side near the feet of the goddess, are also noteworthy.

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The animal on her right side is apparently a lion, whereas the badly mutilated one on her left side may be a deer as seen in the other images of Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* and elaborately commented upon. The depiction of six aged *ṛishis* (sages) pouring oblations in the four burning fires and offering their respects to Pārvatī, seems to represent the idea given in the *Kumārasaṁbhava*. The old sages used to visit Pārvatī in order to pay their regards, inspite of her much younger age, as it was the merit of observance that counted, not the mere age.[32]

We see in the preceding pages that Pārvatī, when represented in penance, is invariably shown in *pañchatapas* indicated by the four fire altars beside her, the fifth source of heat being the Sun-god himself making in all the five sources of heat giving the name to the penance. This characteristic is very common in the images of early medieval period. In the later times penancing Pārvatī is shown even without *agnikuṇḍas* (fire pots) but her major attributes continue to be the same. In this connection the two images of Pārvatī datable to the 11th century A.D. from Kadwaha (District Guna, M.P.) are illustrated. Both the images are preserved *in situ* in the niches of the temples constructed during the time of the rulers of Kachchhapaghāta dynasty. One of the images of standing Pārvatī is represented in a pilastered niche (Plate XXX). In her four hands she holds rosary with *varadamudrā* in the lower right hand and a long pitcher (sacrificial pot) in the lower left hand as usually found in the images from other regions as well. In her upper hands she holds full blossomed lotus flowers over which Śiva (?) is seated on her right side and Gaṇeśa on her left.

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This mode of representation in her hands completely agrees with that of the images hailing from Hingalajgarh (District Mandsaur, M.P.). Over her head she has a long *jatājūṭa* and is ornamented with ear-rings, necklace, *hāra*, *mekhalā* (girdle) with loops and long garland falling below her knees. Near her feet a seated deer on her right side and a lion on her left are shown beside a female attendant on each side. The representation of deer and lion flanking the goddess is a characteristic which is invariably found in the early images hailing from Naresar, Batesara (District Morena, M.P.), Amrol (District Gwalior, M.P.) and other sites in the neighbouring districts as described earlier which have handed over this tradition to the sculptors of the Kachchhapaghāta period at Kadwaha.

The other image of four-handed Pārvatī from Kadwaha, in somewhat mutilated condition (Plate XXXI), is similar to the one from the site described earlier in its ornamentation and general features. Her lower left hand and the figure of Gaṇeśa surmounting the stalked lotus flower are broken off, but the attributes on her right side are intact. The lower right hand is in *varada* pose with a rosary and the upper right one carries a Śaiva (?) image on a lotus flower whose stalk is held by the goddess. Near her feet the presence of a deer on the right and a lion on the left side in addition to a female attendant on each side further confirm its inspiration from the images of the Pratīhāra period as found in Gwalior-Morena region of Madhya Pradesh.

The above iconographic study of the images of Pārvatī from the nothern and western regions of Madhya Pradesh and parts of Rajasthan reveals

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that during the period of 8th to 11th centuries A.D. the making of images of Pārvatī and their worship was very popular. The sculptors of Pratīhāra period invariably carved the images of Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* not only in every Śaiva and Śākta temple but also in Vaishṇava temples as well, though not in the *bhadra* niche, as is illustrated by the image of Pārvatī in the rockcut Chaturbhuja Temple at the Gwalior Fort. The details of the image of Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* as carved out in the temples of Pratīhāra period strikingly agree with those of Pārvatī as described by Kālidāsa in his *Kumārasaṁbhava* which is the foremost literary source to narrate the severe penance of Pārvatī in the most chaste and effective language. The whole description of the *Kumārasaṁbhava* leads us to think that it was the literary source which served as a sort of iconograpic text for the representation of Pārvtī image during early medieval period as illustrated in the foregoing pages by giving numerous quotations. As far the *pañchatapas* aspect is concerned, we find it represented in the early medieval period of 8th-9th centuries by means of four burning fires in pots kept beside the goddess Pārvatī but later on the practice of showing *agnikuṇḍas* (fire-pots) was generally discontinued and Pārvatī was shown undergoing austere *tapas* without them. The images of Pārvatī in general and in *pañchatapas* aspect particular, as described in the earlier pages, are undoubtedly very good examples of artistic perfection of the times when they were carved. As the tender daughter of Himavāna, Pārvatī was not meant to follow such a hard course of penance as she did to gain Śiva as her husband. But even during that hard *tapas*

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she presented the natural charm and grace of a maiden. Witnessing her images in *pañchatapas* one is reminded of the idea expressed by Dushyanta on seeing Śakuntalā attending to odd jobs of the hermitage of sage Kaṇva. One who expects such a beautiful form to observe penance expects something like an impossibility as cutting through a branch of a *śami* tree by means of a tender lotus petal :

idaṁ kilāvyājamanoharaṁ vapus-
tapaḥ kshamaṁ sādhayituṁ ya ichchhati |
dhruvaṁ sa nīlotpalapatradhārayā
śamīlatāṁ chhettumṛishirvyavasyati ||
(*Abhijñānaśākuntala*, I, 18),

REFERENCES

1. *abhrāvakāśā varshāsu hemante jalasaṁśrayā|*
grīshme cha pañchatapasaḥ śaśvachcha mitabhojanāḥ||
(*Mahābhārata*, *Śāntiparva*, 244, 10).

2. *grīshme pañchatapastu syādvarshāsvabrāvakāśikaḥ|*
ārdravāsāstu hemante kramaśo vardhayaṁstapaḥ||
(*Manusmṛiti*, 6, 23).

3. *iyesha sā kartumavandhyarūpatāṁ*
samādhimāsthāya tapobhirātmanaḥ|
(*Kumārasaṁbhava*, V, 2).

4. Sen Gupta, R., The Panels of Kalyāṇasundaramūrti at Ellora, *Lalit Kala*, No. 7, 1960, p. 14.

5. *sphuratprabhāmaṇḍalayā chakāse*
(*Kumārasaṁbhava*, I, 24).

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6. *ākīrṇamṛishipatnīnāmuṭajadvārarodhibhiḥ/*
apatyairiva nīvārabhāgadheyochitairmṛigaiḥ//
ātapātyayasaṁkshiptanīvārāsu nishādibhiḥ/
mṛigairvartitaromanthamuṭajāṅganabhūmishu//
(*Raghuvaṁśa*, I, 50 and 52).

7. Representation of deer is the usual motif associated with figures absorbed in meditation or exposition. Well-known Nara-Nārāyaṇa panel from the Daśāvatāra Temple at Deogarh (MASI, No. 70, Plate XI (a)), seated Buddha image in the *Dharmachakrapravartana* pose from Sarnath and Yoga Vyākhyāna Dakshiṇāmūrti of Śiva from Kanchi (T.A.G. Rao, Elements of Hindu Iconography, Vol. II, Part I, Plate LXXVII), all of them showing the representation of deer may be referred in this connection. However, these instances point out that the presence of deer also indicates a *tapovana* (place of austerities) as in the case of Pārvatī.

8. *vṛittānupurve cha na chātidīrghe*
jaṅghe śubhe sṛishṭavatastadīye/
śeshāṅganirmāṇavidhau vidhātur
lāvaṇya utpādya ivāsa yatnaḥ//
(*Kumārasaṁbhava*, I, 35).

9. *Indian Archaeology 1975-76, A Review*, p. 7, Plate 7A.
10. Banerjea, J.N., *op. cit.*, p. 524.
11. *Ibid*, p. 444.
12. Trivedi, R.D., The Representation of Lakulīśa in Kashmir Art and its Significance, *Journal of Indian Museums*, Vol. XXX (1974-75), New Delhi, p. 68.
13. Harle, J.C., *Gupta Sculpture*, Oxford, 1974, Plate 149.
14. Marshall, J.H. and Sahni, D.R., Excavations at Mandor, *Archaeological Survey of India—Annual Report*, 1909-10, p. 97, Plate XLIII, 4.
15. Banerji, R.D., Basreliefs of Badami, *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, No. 25, 1928, p. 10, Plate IV a.
16. Banerjea, J.N., *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, Calcutta, 1956, p. 501 and Plate XLIII, Fig. 2.

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17. *godhāsanā bhaved Gaurī lalīyā haṁsavāhanā/*
(*Aparājitapṛichchhā*, 222, 37).

18. Pramod Chandra, *Stone Sculptures in the Allahabad Museum, A Descriptive Catalogue,* American Institute of Indian Studies, 1970, p. 167, Plate CLXIX.

19. *didṛikshavastāmṛishayobhyupāgamannadharmavṛiddheshu vayaḥ samīkshate/*
(*Kumārasaṁbhava*, V, 16).

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III. PARVATI AS SIVA'S CONSORT

Pleased with severe penance of Pārvatī and after himself testing her steadfast devotion, Śiva at last yielded to her wish and agreed to accept her as his consort. After the mediation of *saptaṛishis* (seven sages) the marriage of Pārvatī with Śiva was settled at the abode of Himavāna. The marriage scene of Śiva-Pārvatī is often found sculptured in the early medieval period and later centuries and is known as the *Kalyāṇasundara* or *Vaivāhikamūrti*. From the outward appearance, Śiva and Pārvatī appear a pair of contradictions which have been elaborately pointed out in the conversation between Śiva in disguise and Pārvatī.[1] Śiva disguised as a Brahmachārin argues with Pārvatī that Śiva with all his inauspicious, ugly and odd associations is no match for her who is beautiful in all respects. She is asked how she would feel when, at the time of marriage, Śiva's hand wearing snakes as bracelets would hold her hand marked with auspicious decorations. At that time she would be dressed in nuptial silken garment whereas Śiva would be dressed with an elephant hide dripping with blood. She would use sandal paste on her body but Śiva would have the funeral ashes besmeared on himself. Moreover, she is told that people would make a fun of her when she, deserving the ride on the best of elephants, would mount on the old bull of Śiva after her marriage. Pārvatī replies that she under-

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stands the real nature of Śiva who is the highest among the gods and would marry none but Śiva. At the time of marriage all the inauspicious looking objects attached to Śiva became auspicious on account of his association; ashes served the purpose of the best of decorations, skull proved to be the source of splendour of his forehead and the elephant's skin (*gajājina*) attained the effect of a silken garment marked with *gorochana* :

babhūva bhasmaiva sitāṅgarāgaḥ
kapālamevāmala śekharaśrīḥ /
upāntabhāgeshu cha rochanāṅko
gajājinasyaiva dukūlabāhvaḥ //
(*Kumārasaṁbhava*, VII, 32).

The god of love (Kāma), who was destroyed by Śiva previously, exercised equal influence on both of them when Śiva held the hand of Umā with perspiring fingers (*svinnāṅguliḥ*) and Pārvatī felt the erection of hair on her body.[2]

Kalyāṇasundara or *Vaivāhikamūrtis* are found at a number of places notable of them being Elephanta, Ellora, Kanauj and several sites in south India. In most of these images Pārvatī is shown standing on the right side of Śiva as prescribed in ancient scriptures according to which the bride is to be placed on the right side of the bridegroom at the time of marriage. In the *Kalyāṇasundara* images Pārvatī stands in easy posture with bashful expression at her face extending her right hand to be held by Śiva with his right one. In her marriage Vishṇu and Lakshmī are often shown performing the ceremony of *kanyādāna* (offering of bride) to Śiva, Brahmā himself acts as the priest seated

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before the sacrificial fire and *dikpālas* (guardians of quarters), *vidyādharas* etc. in the sky witness the scene of this unique marriage. A *Kalyāṇasundara* image recently noticed from Batesara (District Morena, M.P.) is remarkable for its simple and suggestive treatment (Plate XXXII). In this image Pārvatī as usual stands to the right of Śiva who holds her right hand with his right one. Four-handed Śiva stands in *tribhaṅga* pose, *jaṭābhāra* on his head, holding a flower and a trident (*triśula*) in the upper right and left hands respectively; lower right hand holds the hand of Pārvati and the lower left one rests on his waist. The figure of Pārvati on the right side of the panel has a prominent coiffure tied in *dhammilla* fashion and is ornamented with ear-rings, necklance and *kāṅkaṇa* (bracelets). Her scarf (*uttarīya*) falls over her arm and reaches down to the side of her thighs. In her left hand she carries a mirror and her right hand is held by Śiva. Between the figures of Śiva and Pārvatī, mutilated figure of Brahmā is carved alongwith a fire altar kept in front of him. On the left of Śiva near his feet perhaps Vishṇu with a pitcher in his right hand and similarly Lakshmī behind the figure of Pārvatī with a pitcher in her left hand are represented. Both Vishṇu and Laksmī offer Pārvatī to Śiva as his bride. On the upper side Indra is shown on his elephant, *airāvata*, in the upper right corner, Sūrya seated on a lotus in the middle and a *vidyādhara* figure in the proper left corner. The whole composition is flanked by lotus foliage. The sculpture datable to the 8th century A.D. is remarkable for its simple treatment, direct appeal, restraint ornamentation and effective figural arrangement.

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Śaiva images are divisible in two broad categories, the first category consists of those images which are benign or kind (*saumya*) in disposition while the other category represents his fierce aspect (*raudrarūpa*). Pārvatī as Śiva's consort is generally shown with him when the god is represented in his benign or peaceful form in standing or seated position. In standing position she is depicted with Śiva in the iconographic forms, which are called *Umāsahita Chandraśekhara* and *Āliṅgana Chandraśekhara Mūrtis*. In the former Pārvatī stands on the left side of Śiva while in the latter, as the name itself would indicate, she is embraced by the god with one of his left arms. In the sitting images Pārvatī is represented, seated on the left thigh of Śiva and the bull, Nandī, is generally shown supporting the divine couple. Their sons, Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya, alongwith *Śivagaṇas* are also shown in such images. An image of *Umāmaheśvara* from Hingalajgarh is an interesting illustration of this type (Plate XXXIII). In the image Śiva and Pārvatī are carved under the conopy of a tree bearing bunches of fruits. The god with prominent *jaṭābhāra* on his head is seated on Nandī with Pārvatī sitting on his left thigh and intently looking towards the face of the Lord. Out of the four hands of Śiva two hands are missing while the remnants of two hands are visible. With one his right hands Śiva holds a trident while one of his left hands is caressingly touching the chin of Pārvatī. Two-handed Pārvatī sitting on the lap of Śiva has her right hand resting on the left shoulder of Śiva while her left hand supported on her left knee holds an indistinct object. Here the image of Pārvatī has been marvel-

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lously portrayed with heavy coiffure well-arranged in *dhammilla* fashion on her head and ornamented with *hāra* (necklace), *mekhalā* (girdle), *kaṅkaṇa* (bracelets) and *nūpura* (anklets). Below the bull, Nandī, the figures of Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya, the two sons of Śiva, are interestingly shown fighting with each other in their boyhood pranks. Small figures of *Śivagaṇas* carved behind them appear as if they are trying to pacify both the sons of Śiva in order to disentangle them from fighting. The whole group is flanked by two attendants, one on each side of the pedestal. This naturally represents family life of Pārvatī after her marriage with Śiva.

In the *anugrahamūrtis* showing the pleasure of Śiva on his devotees, Pārvatī is invariably represented with him as she is the mother of all beings and naturally likes to see the fulfilment of desires of the righteous persons. Of the *anugrahamūrtis*, the *Rāvaṇānugrahamūrti* showing Rāvaṇa lifting the mount Kailāsa on which Śiva and Pārvatī are seated, is specially interesting. It is in this iconographic form that Pārvatī is often represented afraid and clinging to the body of Śiva. A number of sculptures from Ellora depict *Rāvaṇānugrahamūrti* in which multi-armed Rāvaṇa is shown lifting the mount Kailāsa over which every one except Śiva seems to be perturbed with the upheaval and Pārvatī hectically moves towards Śiva for seeking his protection. The *Gaṅgādharamūrti* depicting Śiva as receiving the river Gaṅgā on his head, is another type of image which shows Pārvatī's anxiety. It is referred to in the *Meghadūta* where descending current of Gaṅgā on the *jaṭās* (locks) of Śiva is mentioned as if ridiculing the

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anger of Pārvatī who was annoyed to see a woman on the head of her husband and holding his locks of hair :

Gaurīvaktrabhrukuṭirachanāṁ
yā vihsyeva phenaiḥ
Śaṁbhoḥ keśagrahaṇamakarod-
indulagnormihastā ||

(*Meghadūta*, I, 54).

In a lovely discourse of Śiva and Pārvatī this jealous attitude of the goddess towards Gaṅgā is further visualised. Pārvatī noticing Gaṅgā on the head of Śiva asks him, 'Who is this blessed one on your head ?' 'It is *śaśikalā* (the crescent)', replies Śiva trying to hide the identity of Gaṅgā. Pārvatī further enquires, 'Is Śaśikalā her name ?' to which Śiva responds 'It is just a term to denote it, but how have you forgotten it which is so well known to you?' On this Pārvatī comes out to express emphatically, 'I am asking about the woman not about the crescent.' Even then Śiva evades the answer and tells, 'If you don't trust the crescent, Vijayā will explain all about it.' This fanciful conversation of Pārvatī and Śiva emphasises Pārvatī's anxiety to know about Gaṅgā who becomes her co-wife :

dhanyā keyaṁ sthitā te śirasi śaśikalā
kiṁ nu nāmaitadasyā
nāmaivāsyās tadetat parichitamapi te vismṛitaṁ
kasya hetoḥ |
nārīṁ pṛichchhāmi nenduṁ kathayatu Vijayā
na pramāṇaṁ yadīndur

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devyā nihnotumichchhoriti surasaritaṁ
śāṭhyamavyādvibhorvaḥ ||
(*Mudrārākshasa*, I, 1).

In a large number of sculptures representing *Gaṅgā-dharamūrti*, Pārvatī is so often shown in quite morose attitude as if she is jealous of the presence of Gaṅgā over the head of Śiva who tries to pacify her lovingly.[3]

Inseparable identity of Pārvatī with Śiva is best represented in the *Ardhanārīśvara* form in which both of them are shown in one body; the left half being that of Pārvatī and the right half that of Śiva. At first sight, Nārada predicted that due to her intense love for Śiva, Pārvatī would share half of his body :

samādideśaikavadhūṁ bhavitrīṁ
premṇā śarīrārdhaharāṁ harasya|
(*Kumārasaṁbhava*, I, 50).

On the occasion of her marriage Pārvatī was blessed by her elders to obtain the undivided love of her husband (*akhaṇḍitaṁ prema labhasva patyuḥ*) but she even surpassed their blessings by occupying half of the body of Śiva :

tayā tu tasyārdhaśarīrabhājā
paśchātkṛitāḥ snigdhajanāśisho'pi ||
(*Kumārasaṁbhava*, VII, 28).

The *Ardhanārīśvara* form is also referred to in the invocatory verse of the *Mālavikāgnimitra* describing Śiva as a person whose body is united with that of his beloved and yet he is the foremost among the ascetics having no attachment with worldly pleasures :

kāntāsammiśradehopyavishaya manasāṁ yaḥ
parastādyatīnāṁ |
(*Mālavikāgnimitra*, I, 1).

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In the opening verse of the *Raghuvaṁśa*, significance of *Ardhanārīśvara* form has been effectively pointed out by saying, 'as words and their meaning are in constant association with each other (*vāgarthāviva saṁpṛiktau*)' and no one can think of them separately, similarly Pārvatī and Śiva cannot be conceived of with any sense of difference. In fact the poet believes that Pārvatī and Śiva are *prakṛiti* and *purusha* united together to cause the existence of all beings and hence deserve title of the parents of whole universe (*jagataḥ pitarau*) :

vāgarthāviva saṁpṛiktau vāgarthapratipattaye /
jagataḥ pitarau vande Pārvatīparameśvarau //
(*Raghuvaṁśa*, I, 1).

The *Ardhanārīśvara* form was very popular among the poets of medieval period and we find interesting descriptions of this form. The *Rājataraṅgiṇī* of Kalhaṇa has salutations to the *Ardhanārīśvara* form in the invocatory verses given in the beginning of all the eight *taraṅgas*. All of these invocatory verses are remarkable for their poetic imagination and wonderful visualisation of the unity of Pārvatī and Śiva in a single body. In one of these, the wives of gods are mentioned praising the great love of Śiva for Pārvatī. They tell Aparṇā (*i.e.* Pārvatī, who in her fast left even eating leaves fallen from the trees) that it is not due to the efficacy of her austerities performed by taking only leaves or air that she secured half of the body of Śiva. Had the survival on leaves or air been the reason of her eternal unity with Śiva, the bull Nandī, which lives on leaves, and the snakes on the body of Śiva, which live on air, would have secured half of the body of Śiva

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long back and not remained out of his body. It is only through intense love of Śiva for Pārvatī that she could occupy half of the body of the Lord of the universe :

nedaṁ parṇasamīraṇāsanatapo māhātmyamukshoragau, paśyaitāvata eva samprati kṛitau
tanmātravṛittī bahiḥ /
premṇaivārdhamidaṁ charācharaguroḥ prāpeyamātmastutīrevaṁ devavadhūmukhāchchhrutisukhāḥ
śṛiṇvantyaparṇāvatat //

(*Rājataraṅgiṇī*, VI, 1).

The images of *Ardhanārīśvara* form are found in a large number in the whole of country. In this form the left side of the image represents Pārvatī with all her feminine characteristics while the right side represents Śiva in masculine appearance. The limbs, clothes, ornaments and attributes of the image are in accordance with those of Pārvatī and Śiva on the left and right sides respectively. It indeed requires a very careful and experienced handling of an artist to combine two completely different figures into one body and maintain the spirit of unity. In a number of examples of *Ardhanārīśvara* images the sculptor had shown his unique skill and masterly treatment in their preparation. The *Ardhanārīśvara* image from Elephanta may be cited as one of the best examples of this iconographic form (Plate XXXIV).

The mother aspect of Pārvatī is represented in the *Somāskanda* images from south India mostly found in bronze. As the name itself would indicate, in this group the figures of Umā and Śiva are depicted, seated side by side with Skanda or

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Kārttikeya between them. The figure of Skanda with one face and a single pair of arms is shown in the *Somāskanda* images as an innocent child standing, seated or dancing between the figures of Pārvatī and Śiva. The intense love of Pārvatī for Skanda, as shown in the *Somāskanda* images, is often mentioned in literary texts as well. Pārvatī, who formerly used lotus petals as ear ornaments, was fond of decorating her ears with the feathers of peacock, the mount of Skanda, due to her great affection for her son :

jyotirlekhāvalayi galitaṁ yasya barhaṁ Bhavānī
putrapremṇā kuvalayadalaprāpi karṇekaroti |
(*Meghadūta*, I, 48).

Pārvatī's marriage with Śiva obtained fulfilment after the birth of Kārttikeya and consequently the divine couple came to be renowned as an example of ideal and happy parents like Indra and Śachī after the birth of their son Jayanta :

Umāvṛishāṅkau śarajanmanā yathā
yathā Jayantēna Śachīpurandarau ||
(*Raghuvaṁśa*, III, 23).

The above account of Pārvatī as the consort of Śiva as described in a number of literary texts and illustrated in the sculptural art points out the popularity of the theme. The worship of the images of Śiva and Pārvatī was wide spread through out the length and breadth of this vast country and each region has some of the best examples of the divine couple. The devotion of Pārvatī to Śiva was so great that it was taken as an ideal for all times to come. The maids desirous of getting a suitable

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husband always worshipped Pārvatī, who is also known as Bhavānī Girijā, etc. It was believed that without her pleasure before the marriage ceremony no maid could get the desired bridegroom. Often Pārvatī or Girijā was accepted as *Kuladevī* (tutelary goddess) to safeguard the welfare of the whole family and was invariably worshipped to grant her favour at the time of marriage and other ceremonies.

In the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* Pārvatī's worship is mentioned in a very critical situation at the time of the marriage of Rukmiṇī, the daughter of Bhīshmaka of Vidarbha country. Rukmiṇī wanted that she should be married to Kṛishṇa but against her wish her brother Rukmī arraged her marriage with Śiśupāla of the Chedi dynasty. In this situation Rukmiṇī sent a secret message to Kṛishṇa with the request that he should forcibly carry her away as his bride from the temple of Girijā (*i.e.* Pārvatī) located at the outskirts of the city, where she, as a young bride, would be taken to pay homage to the *Kuladevī* just a day before her marriage :

pūrvedyurasṭi mahatī kuladeviyātrā
yasyāṁ bahirnavabadhūrgirijāmupeyāta //
(*Bhāgavata*, 10, 52, 42).

The temple of Girijā in the same context is referred to as *Ambikālaya* and *Devīsadana* (*Bhāgavata*, 10, 53, 39 and 44). Curiously enough, the other deities associated with Pārvatī are also mentioned at the time of worship in the temple. Pārvati is not represented alone there but alongwith her husband Bhava (*Bhavānvitām*) and her sons (*svasantānayutām*), Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya. This description of Pārvatī alongwith Śiva and her sons points out the

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type of image which is known as *Umāmaheśvara-mūrti* in the iconographic texts and finds illustration in a large number of sculptures. It is this aspect of Pārvatī or Bhavānī to which Rukmiṇī propitiates for receiving Kṛishṇa as her husband :

Bhavānīṁ vandayāñchakrurbhavapatnīṁ
Bhavānvitām /
namasye tvambike bhīkshṇāṁ svasantānayutāṁ
śivāṁ bhūyāt patirme bhagavān Kṛishṇastadanu-
modatām //

(*Bhāgavata*, 10, 53, 45-46).

The practice of worshipping Pārvatī by a maid just before her marriage ceremony is further mentioned in the *Rāmacharitamānasa* of Tulsīdāsa datable to the 16th century. Sītā, just before her marriage, is described going to the temple of Pārvatī who is named here as Girijā, Bhavānī, Gaurī, etc. as in the *Bhāgavata* at the time of the marriage of Rukmiṇī referred to above. After having an encounter with Rāma, Sītā realises that he is the most suitable bridegroom for her. When she is sent to offer her worship at Pārvatī's temple (*Bhavānībhavana*) just before her marriage, she invokes the blessings of Pārvatī in order to get Rāma as her husband. The terms in which Pārvatī is praised by Sītā are remarkable for their striking similarity with those used by Rukmiṇī in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Pārvatī is addressed by Sītā as the daughter of the lord of mountains, the consort of Śiva intently looking at his face and the mother of Gaṇeśa (*Gajabadana*) and Kārttikeya (*Shaḍānana*) (*Rāmacharitamānasa*, I, 234, 3). This reference of the worship of Pārvatī at the time of marriage of Sītā as described by Tulsīdāsa

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indicates the continuity of the tradition throughout the medieval period.

These instances would clearly point out that the worship of Pārvatī was very popular and every section of society adored her in one form or the other. A large number of images were also made to be placed in temples and shrines of various dimensions in every locality. She represented the mother aspect of the Supreme Being hence could win the natural faith and devotion of all human beings. Even now she is the most popularly worshipped deity under one name or the other in every nook and corner of this vast country.

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PLATES

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I. Pārvatī adoring Śiva, Terracotta panel from Ahichchhatra.

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II. Pārvatī in *pañchatapas*, Ellora.

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III. Pārvatī in *pañchatapas*, Temple No. 22, Naresar.

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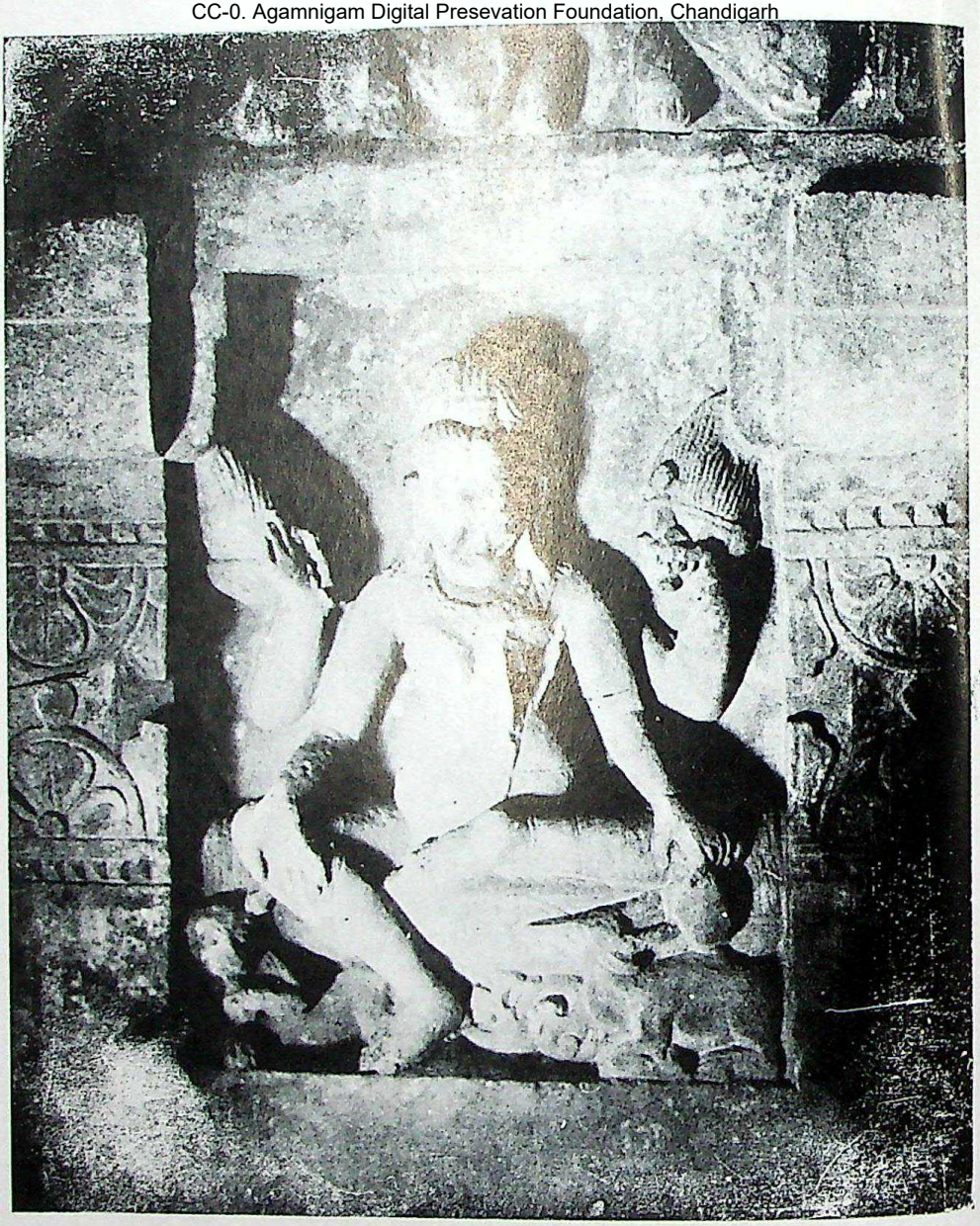

IV. Pārvatī in *pañchatapas*, Batesara.

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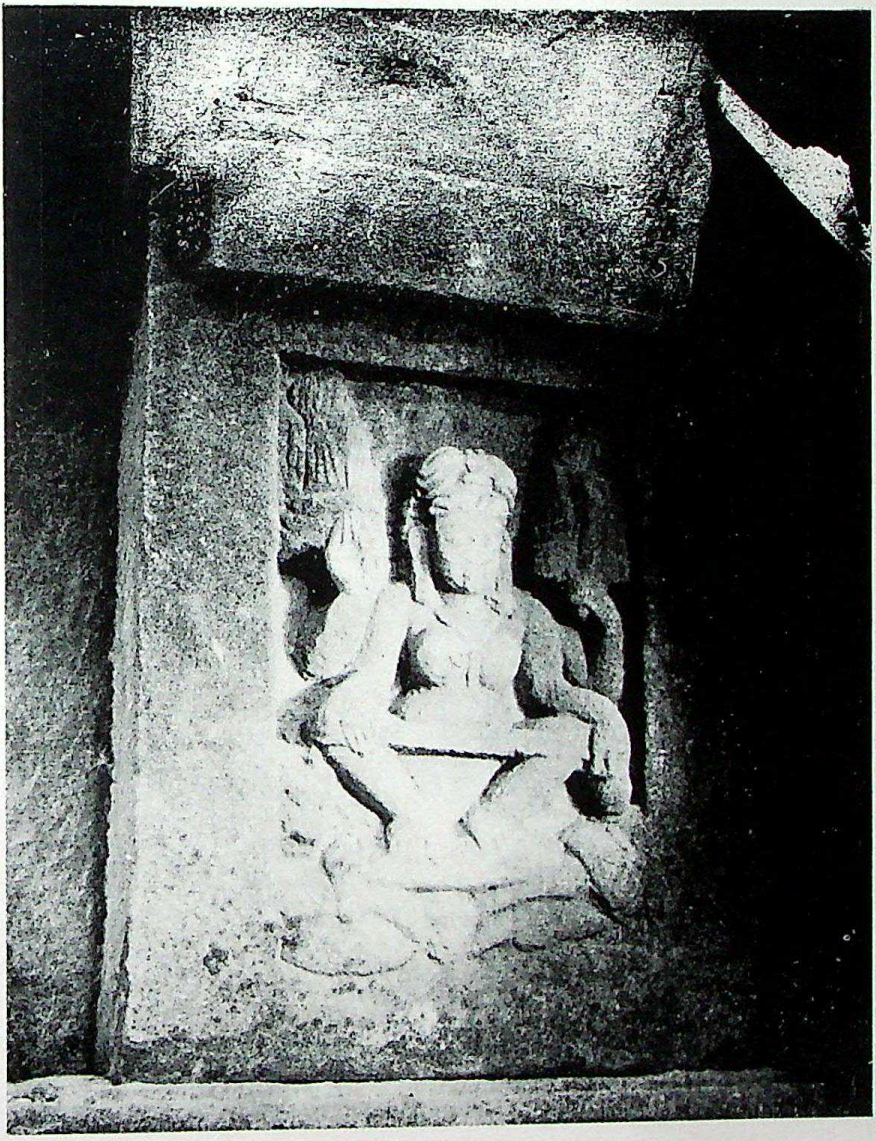

V. Pārvatī with *yogapaṭṭa*, Batesara.

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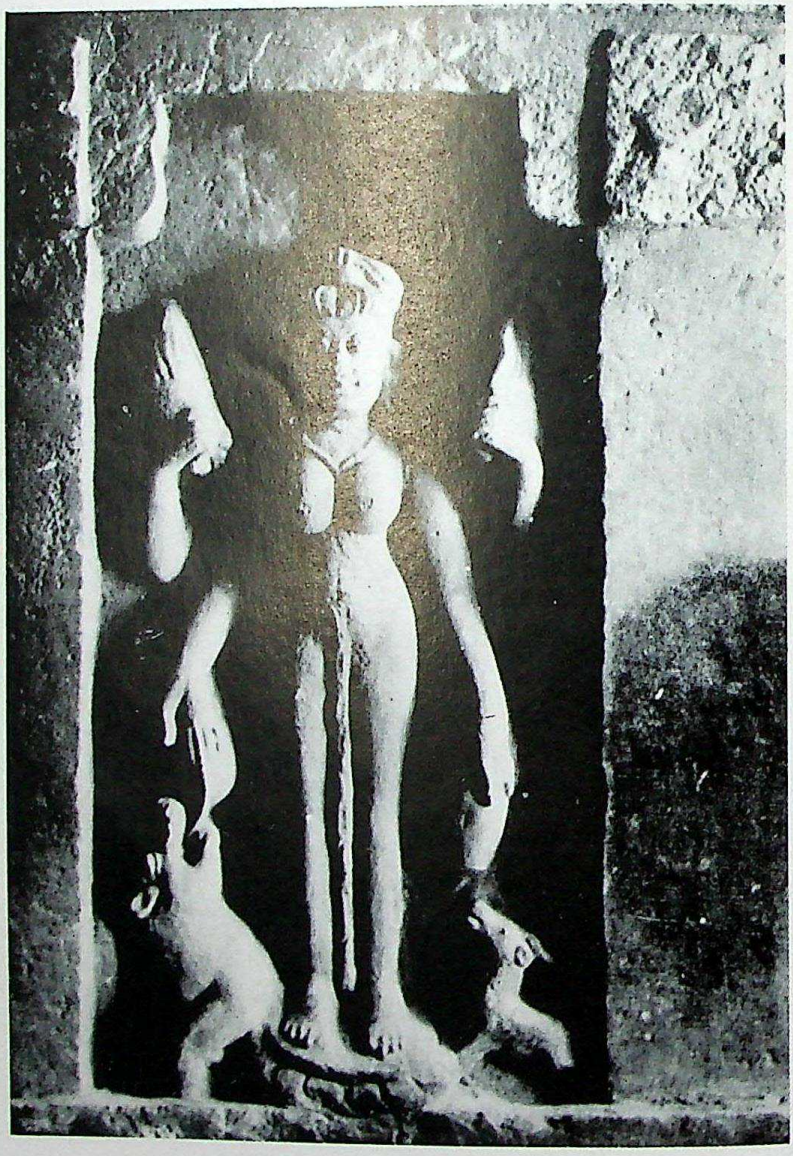

VI. Pārvatī in *pañchatapas*, Temple No. 19, Naresar.

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VII. Pārvatī in *pañchatapas*, Temple No. 20, Naresar.

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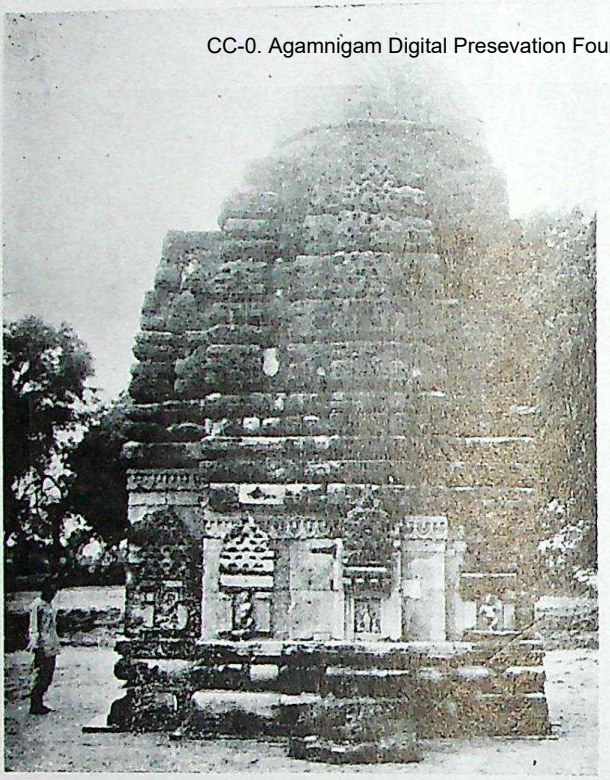
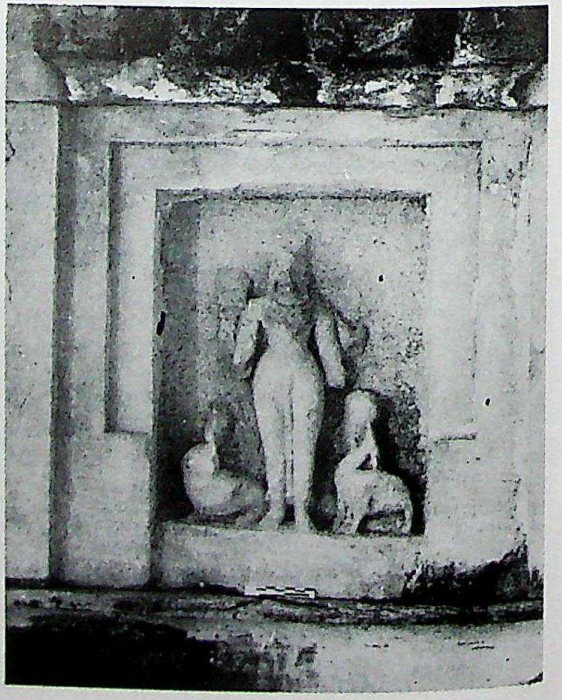
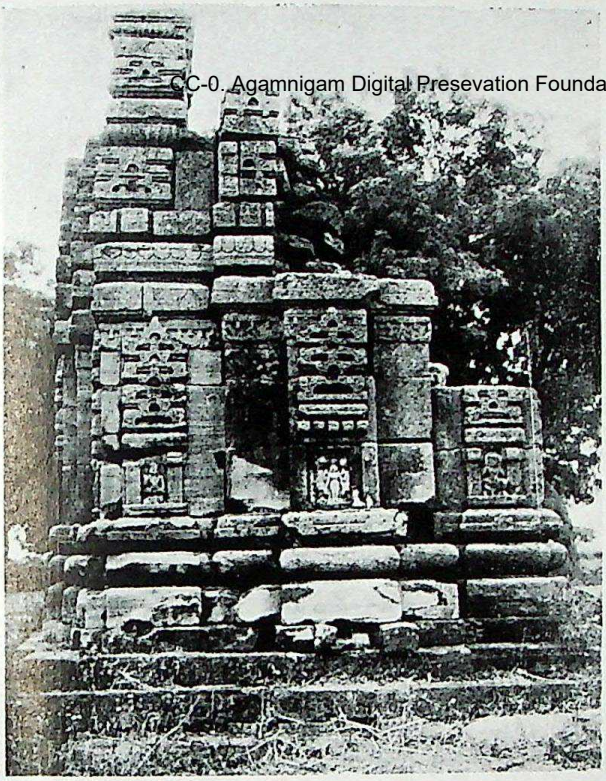


VIII. Rameshwara Temple, Amrol.



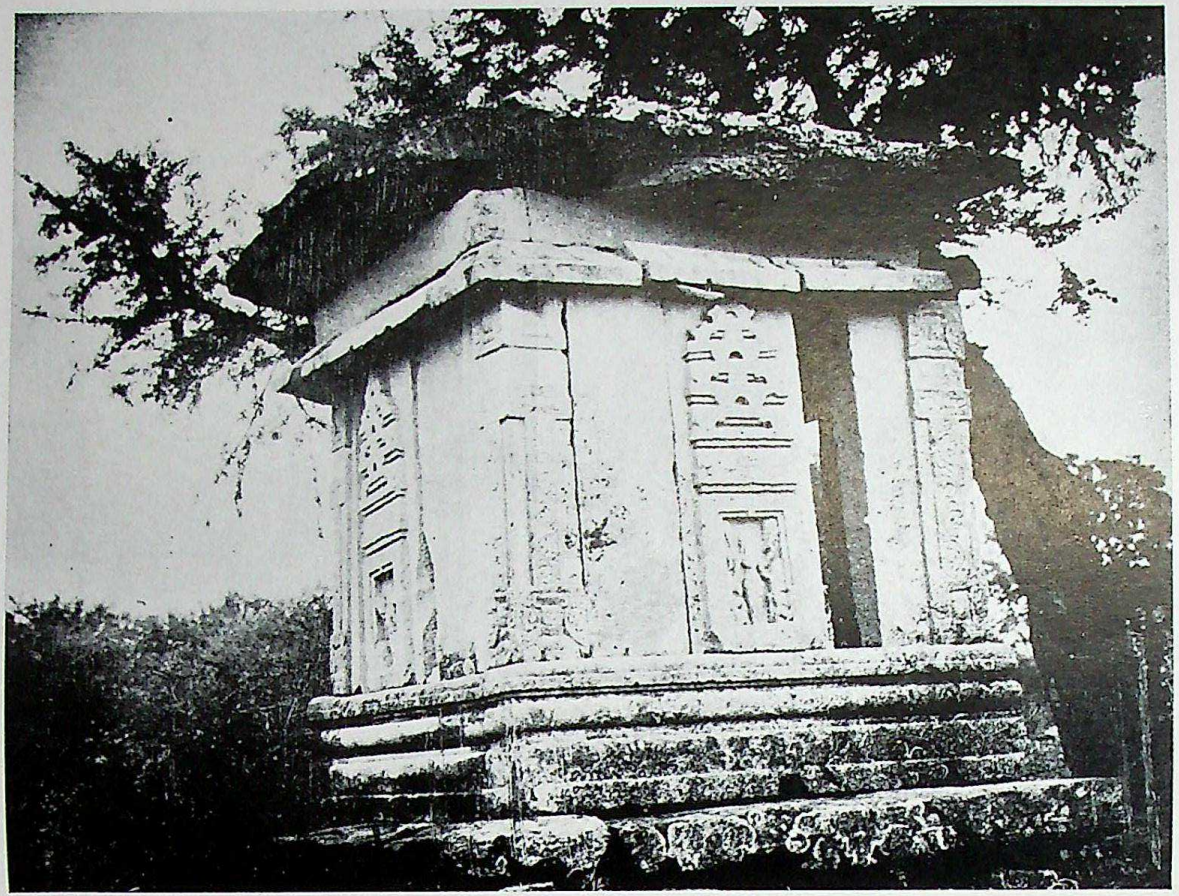
IX. Pārvatī in *pañchatapas*, Rameshwara Temple, Amrol.

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



X. Danebaba Temple, Amrol.

XI. Central niche with Pārvatī in *pañchatapas*, Danebaba Temple, Amrol.



XII. Pārvatī in the central niche, Maṇḍapikā at Sesai.

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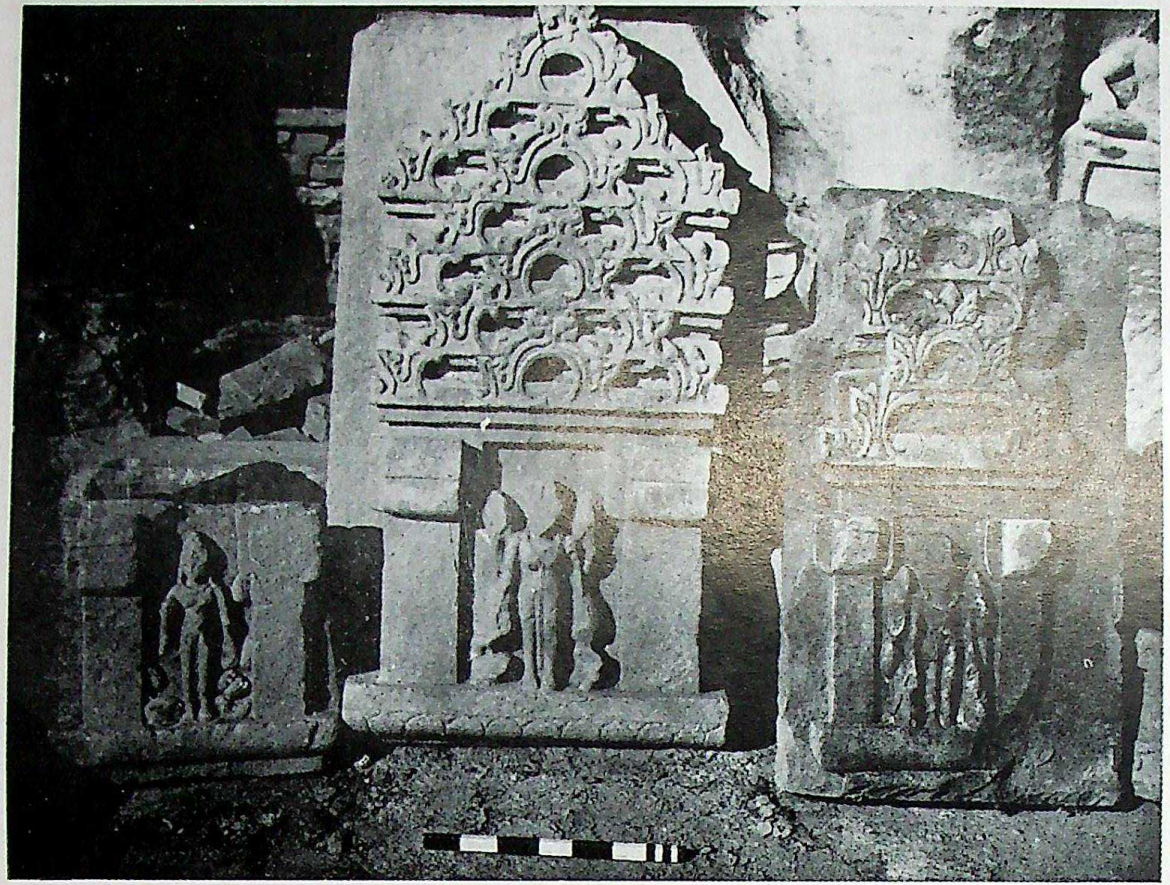
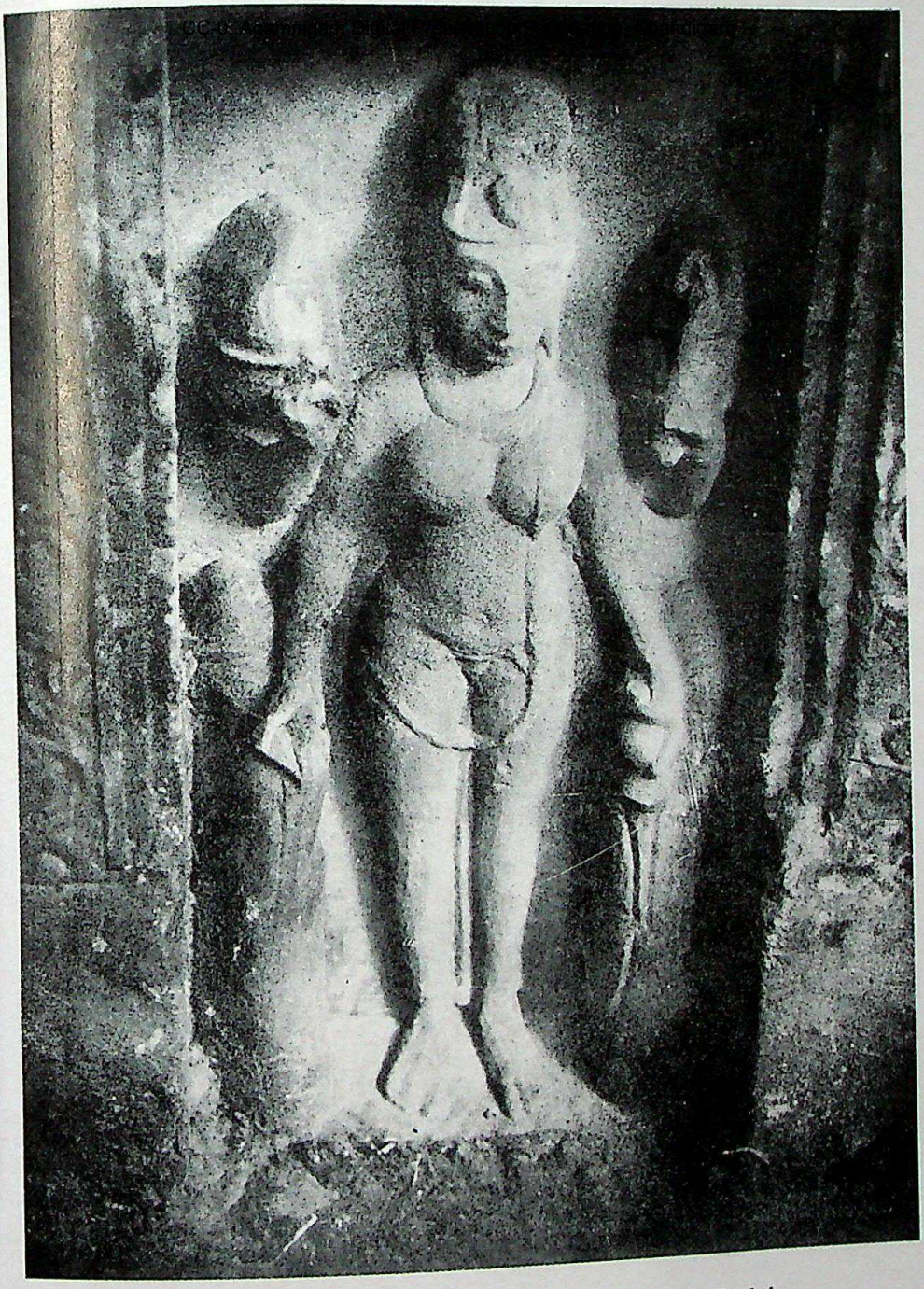
XIII. Pārvatī with other panels showing Sūrya, Gaṇeśa, Gaṅgā and Yamunā, Badoh.



XIV. Niches containing Pārvatī in *pañchatapas*, Pathari.

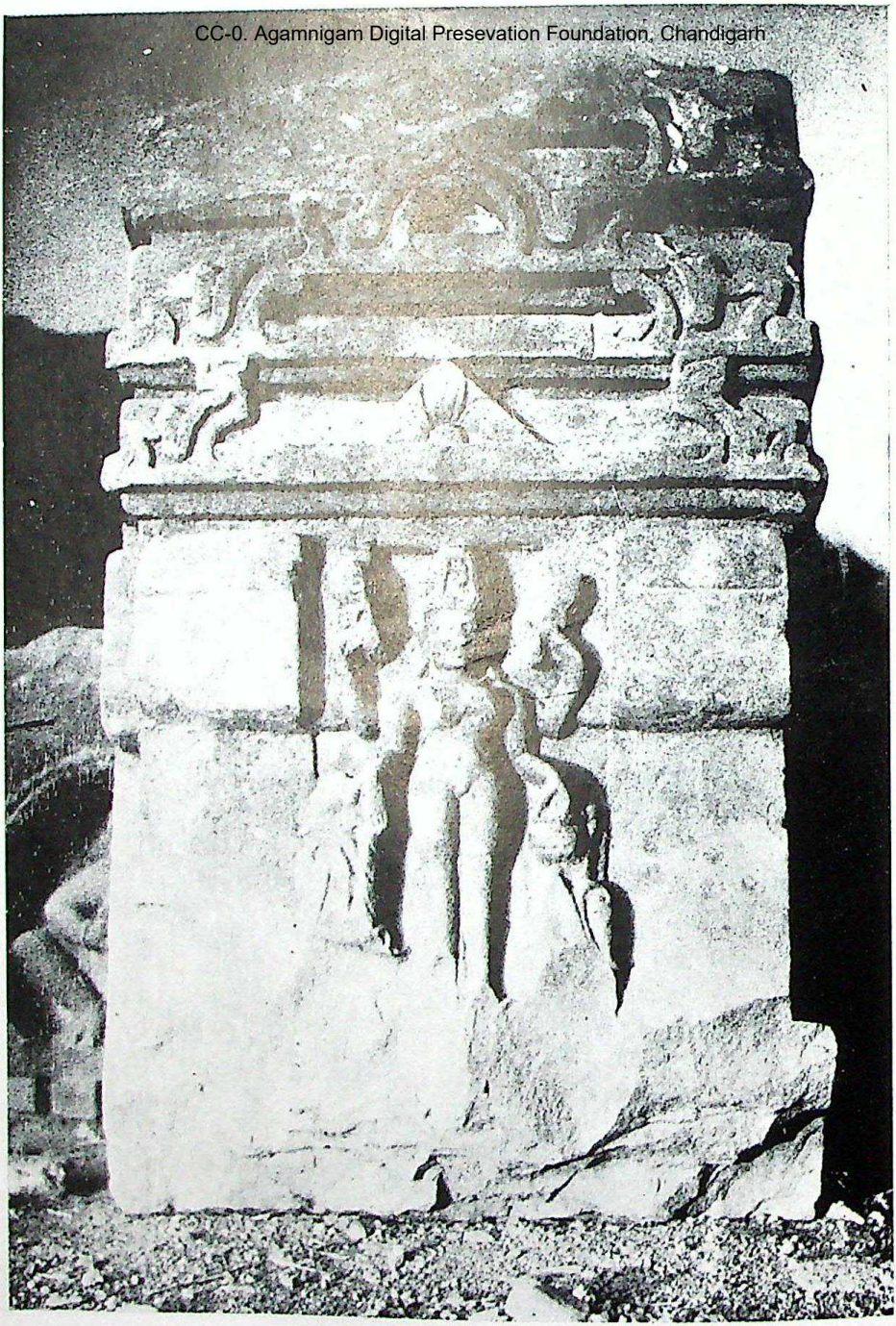
CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

CC-0. Agamnigam Digitized by eGangotri



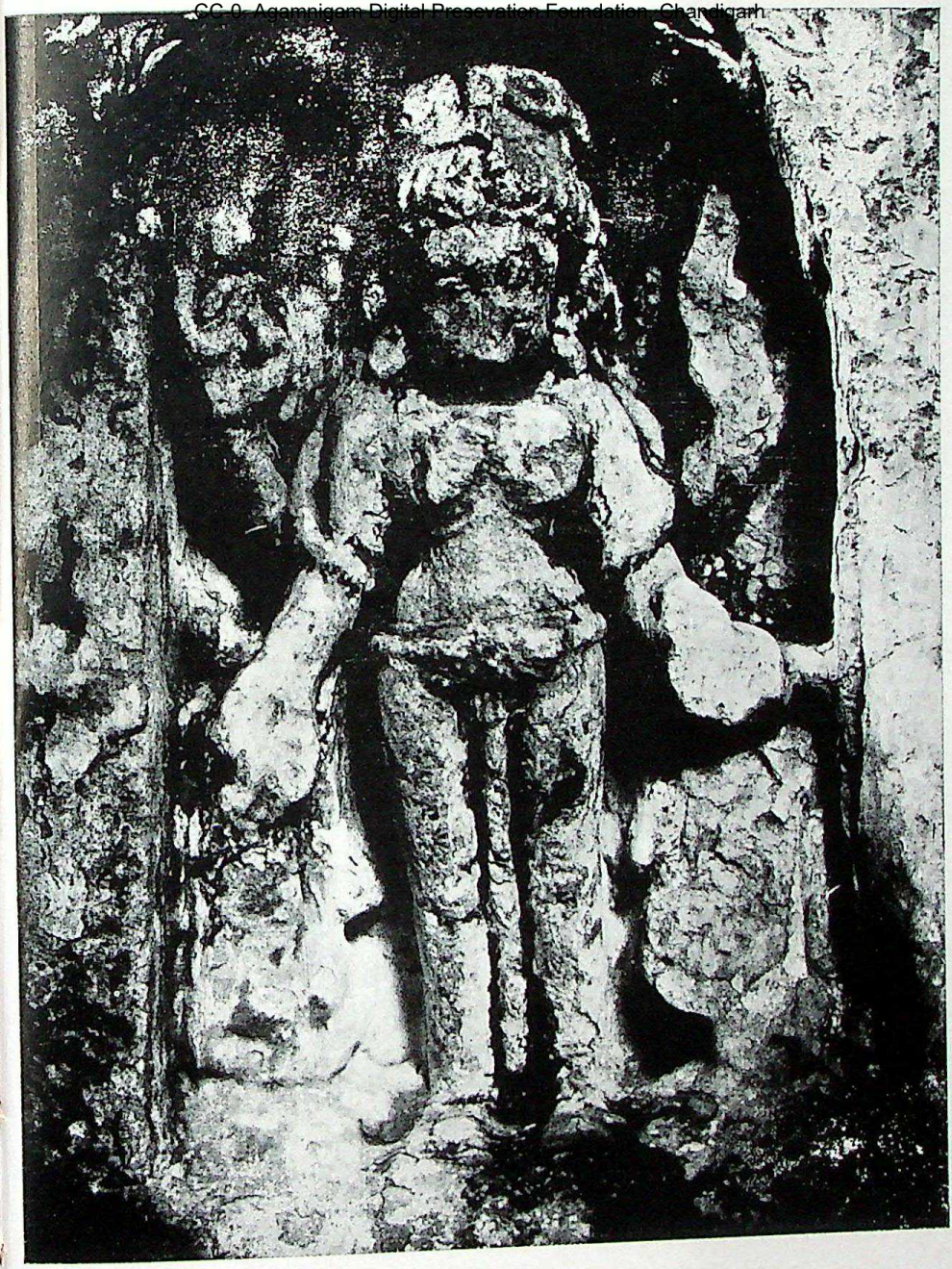
XV. Pārvatī in *pañchatapas*, Gadarmal Temple, Badoh.

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



XVI. Pārvatī, Deogarh.

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation, Chandigarh.



XVII. Pārvatī, Śiva Temple, Kansua.

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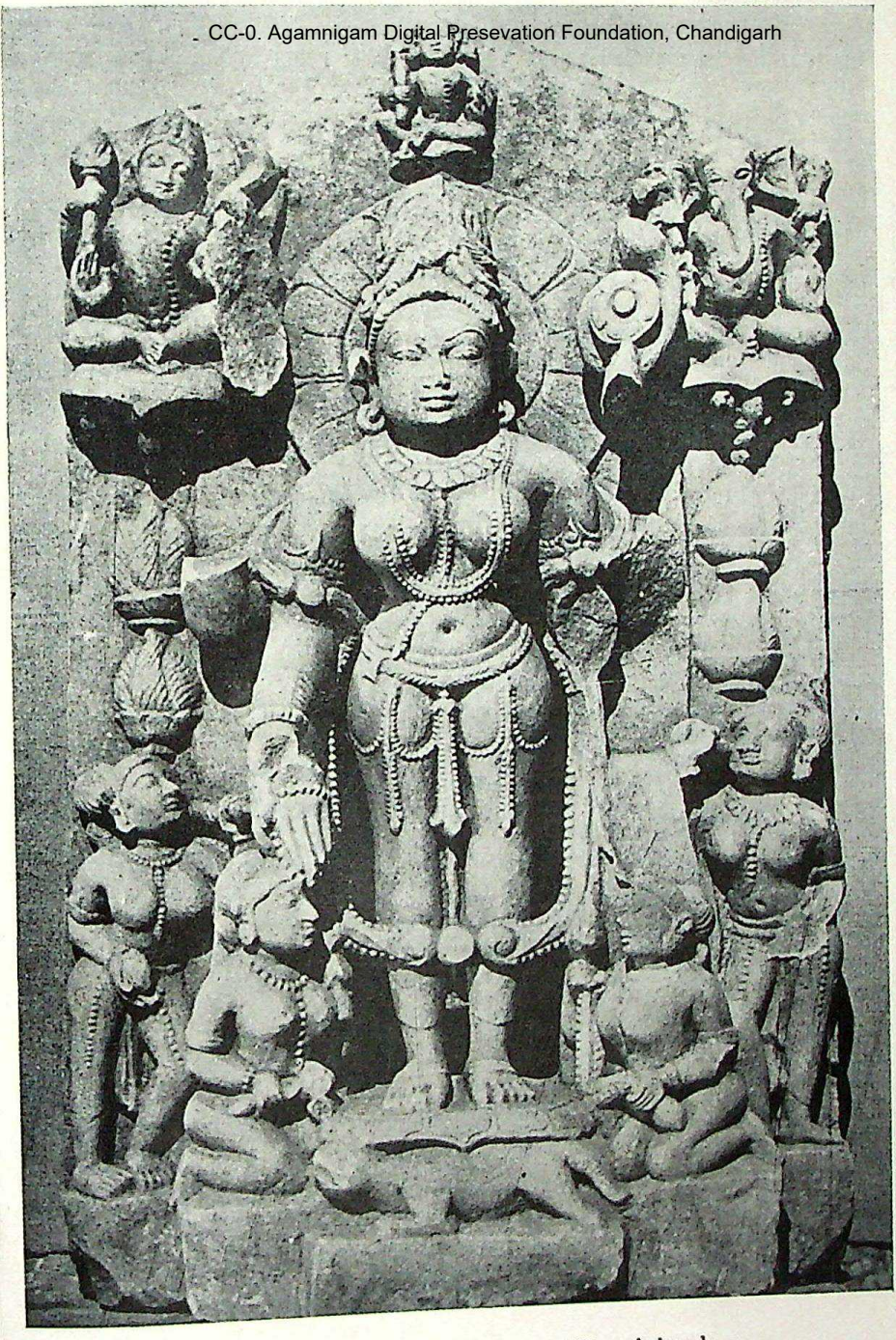
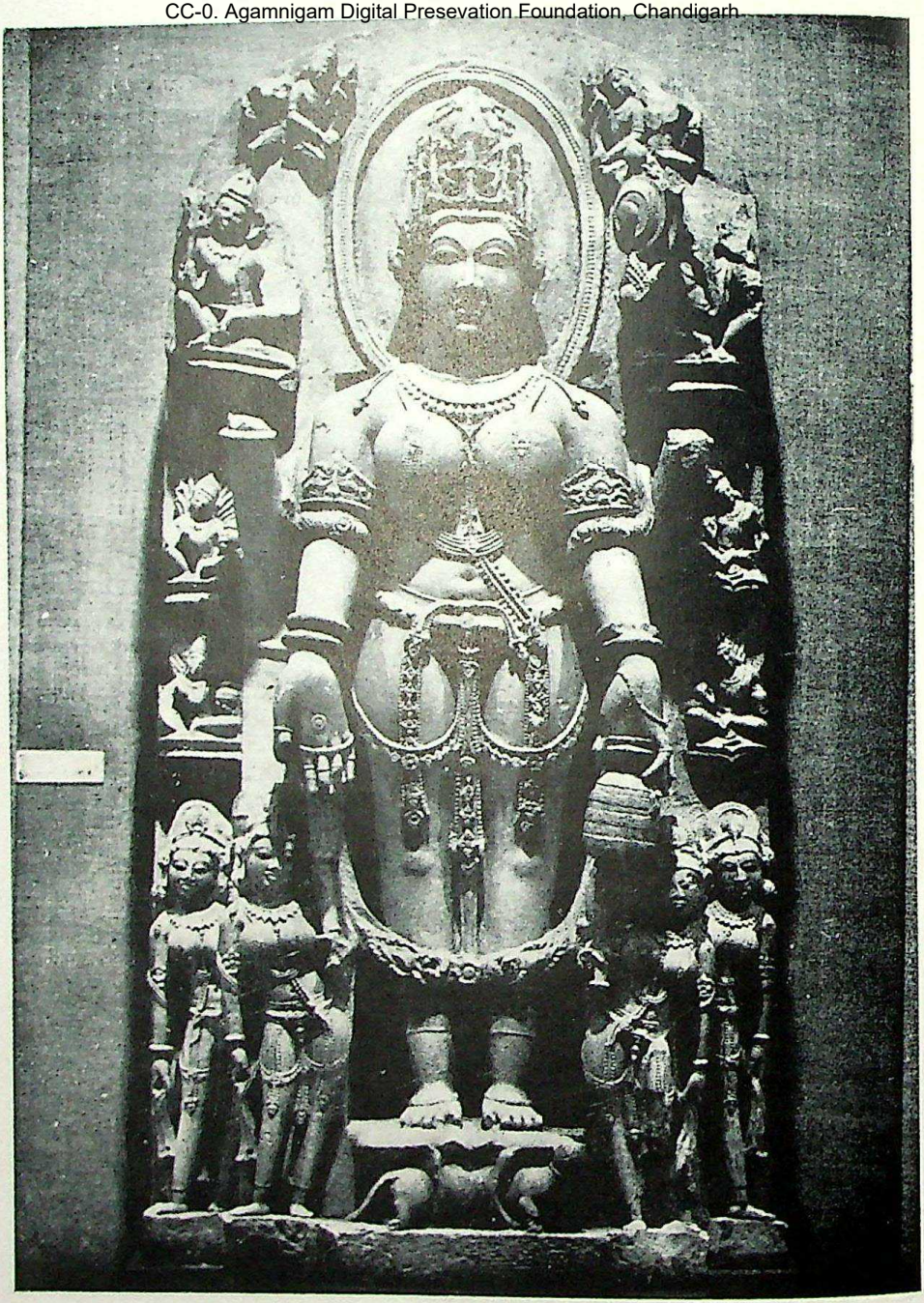
XVIII. Pārvatī, Triple-shrined Temple, Menal.

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



XIX. Pārvatī in *pañchatapas*, Hingalajgarh.

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

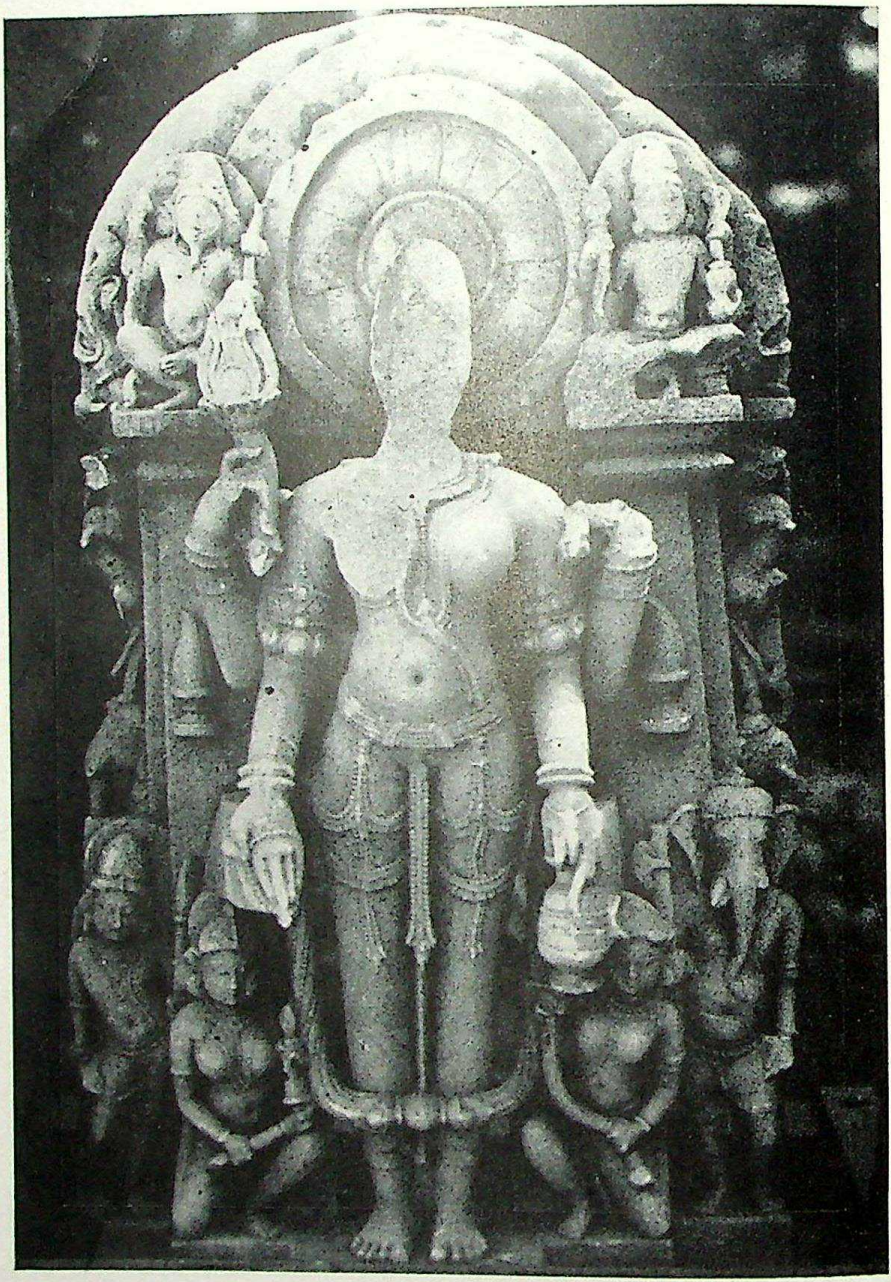


XX. Pārvatī in *pañchatapas*, Hingalajgarh.

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

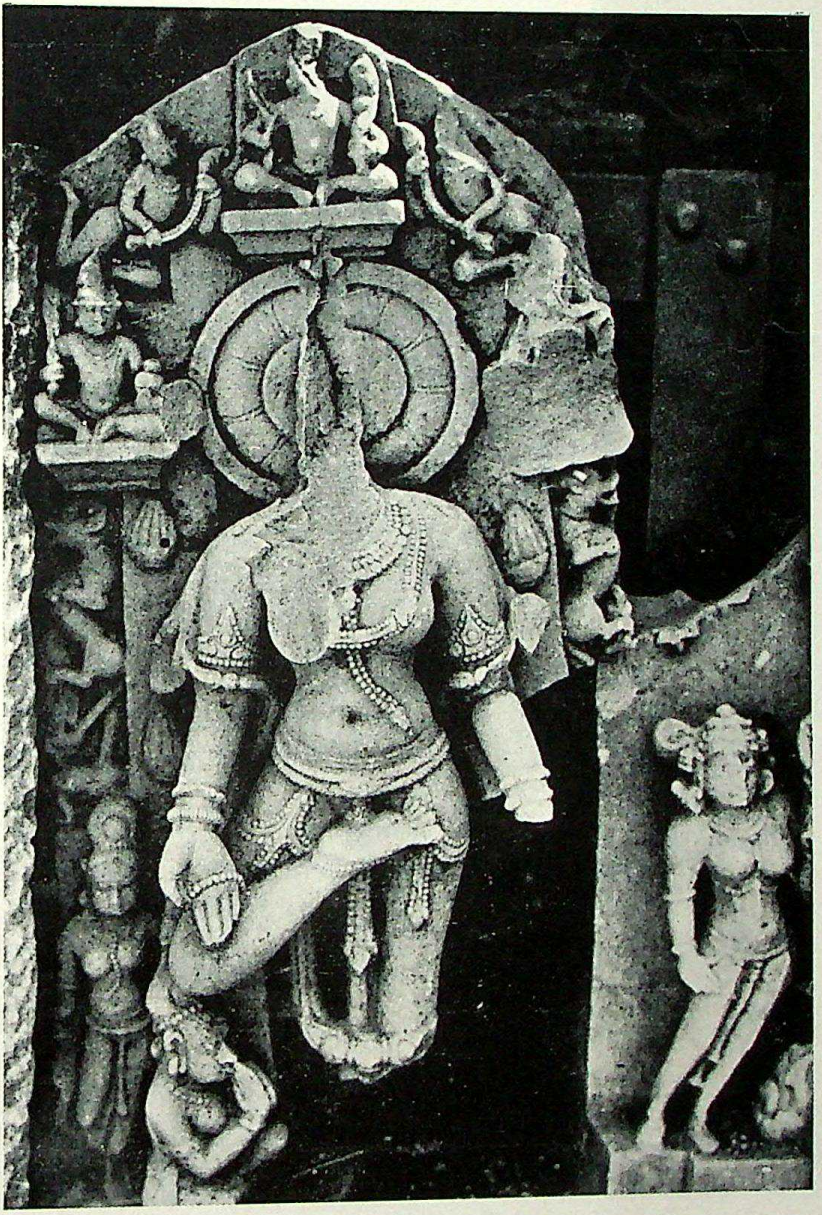
XXI. Pārvatī in *pañchatapas*, Hingalajgarh.

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



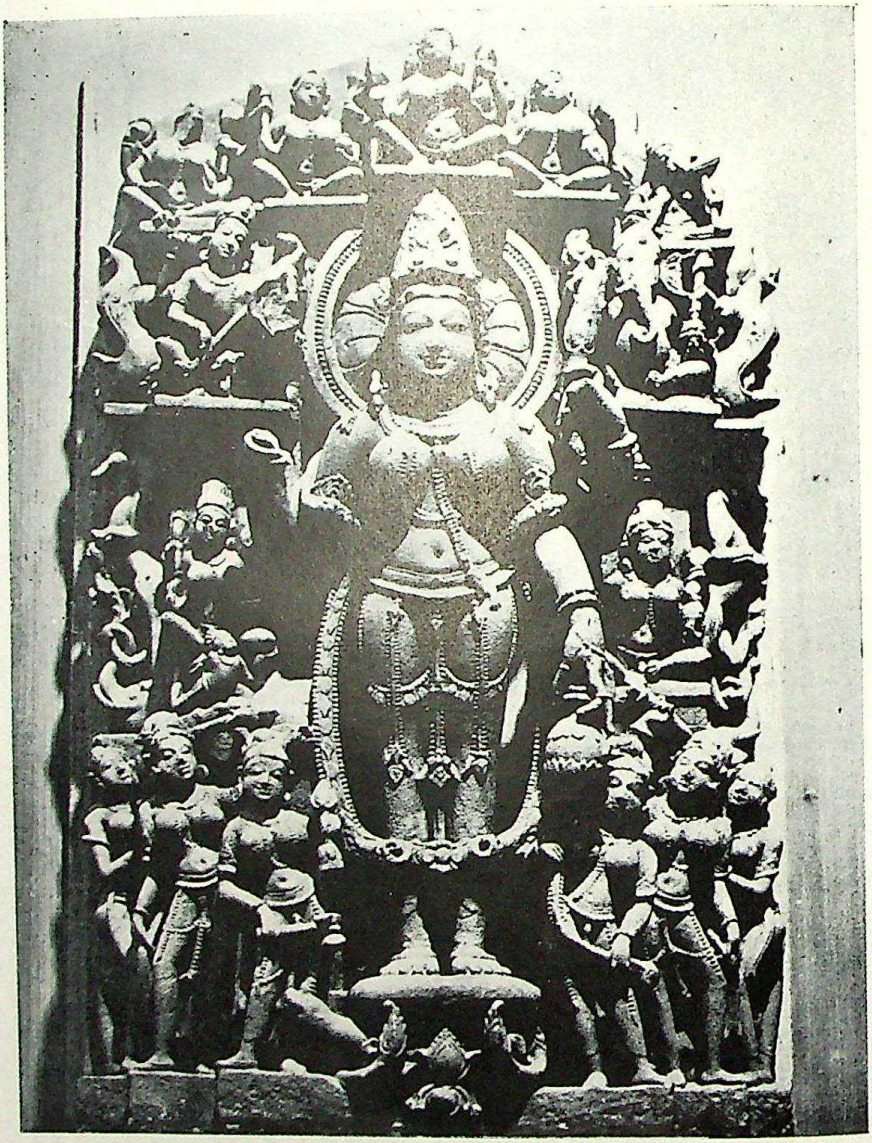
XXII. Pārvatī, Hingalajgarh.

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



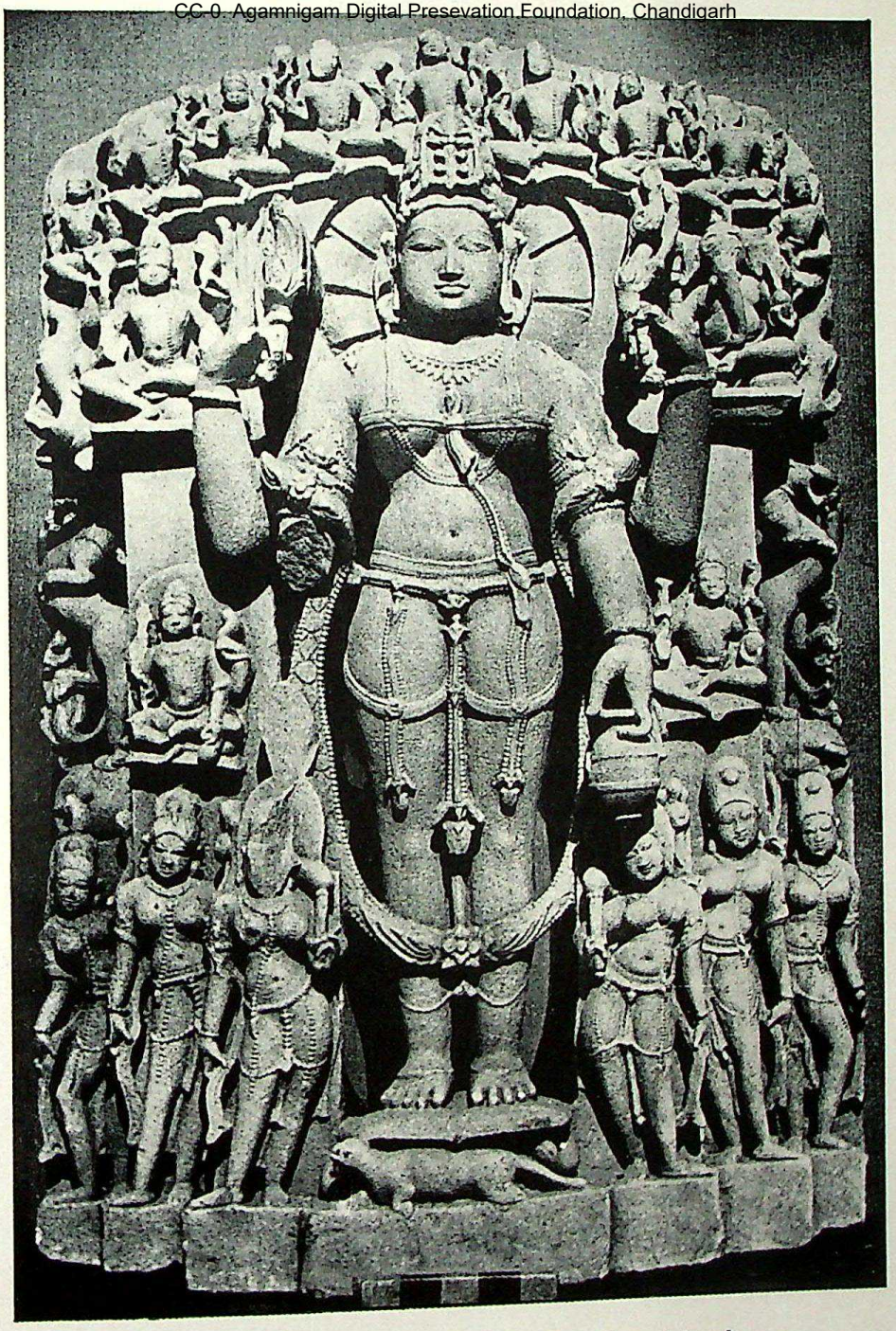
XXIII. Pārvatī in *pañchatapas* on one leg, Hingalajgarh.

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



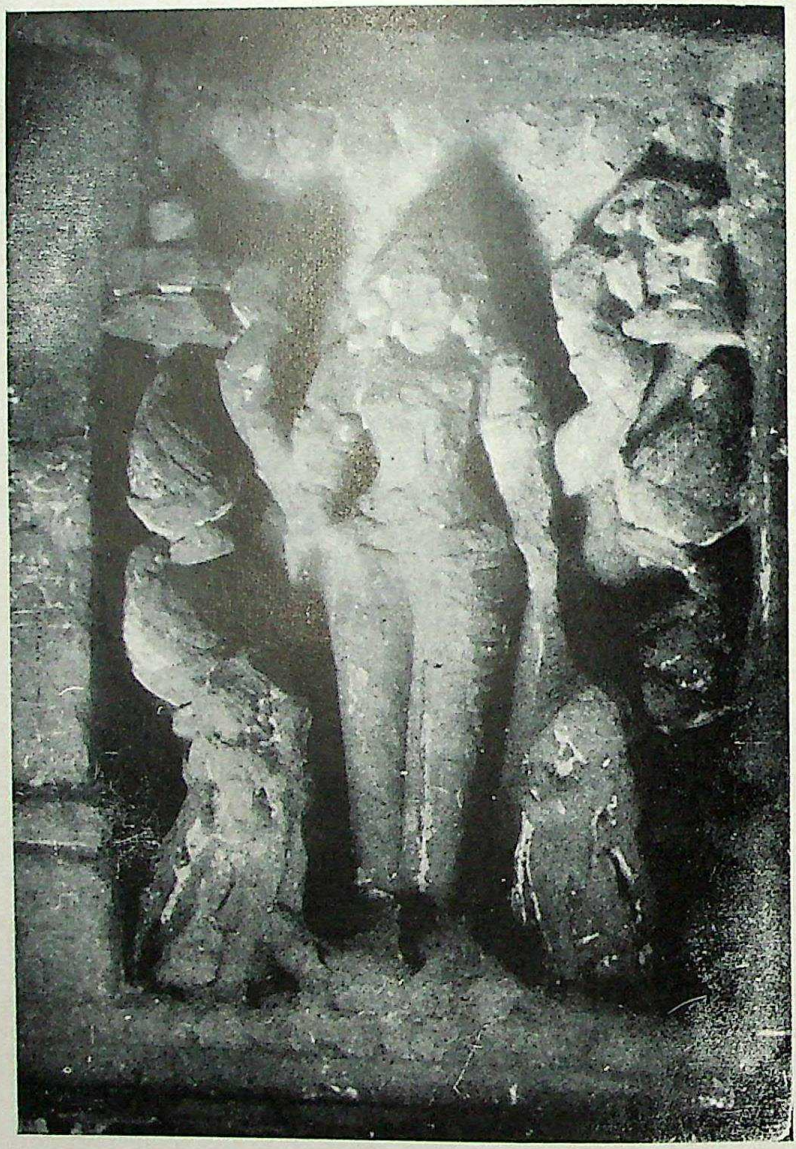
XXIV. Pārvatī with *saptamāṭṛikas*, Hingalajgarh.

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



XXV. Pārvatī with *ekādasarudras*, Hingalajgarh.

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



XXVI. Pārvatī in *pañchatapas*, Śiva Temple, Buchkala.

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

XXVII. Pārvatī on one leg in *pañchatapas*, Chittaurgarh.

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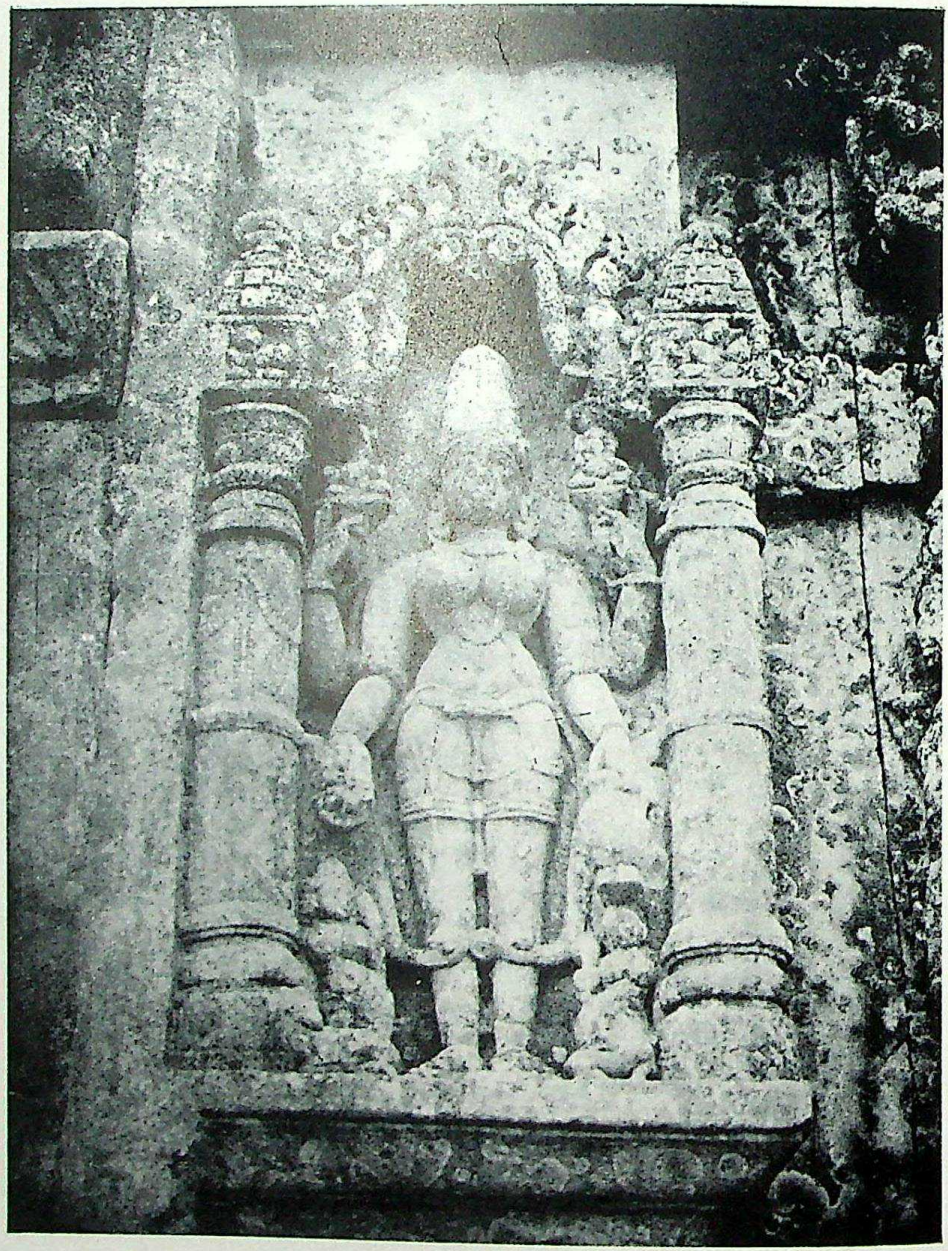
XXVIII. Pārvatī on one leg in *pañchatapas*, Ratneshwara Temple, Chittaurgarh.

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation, Chandigarh

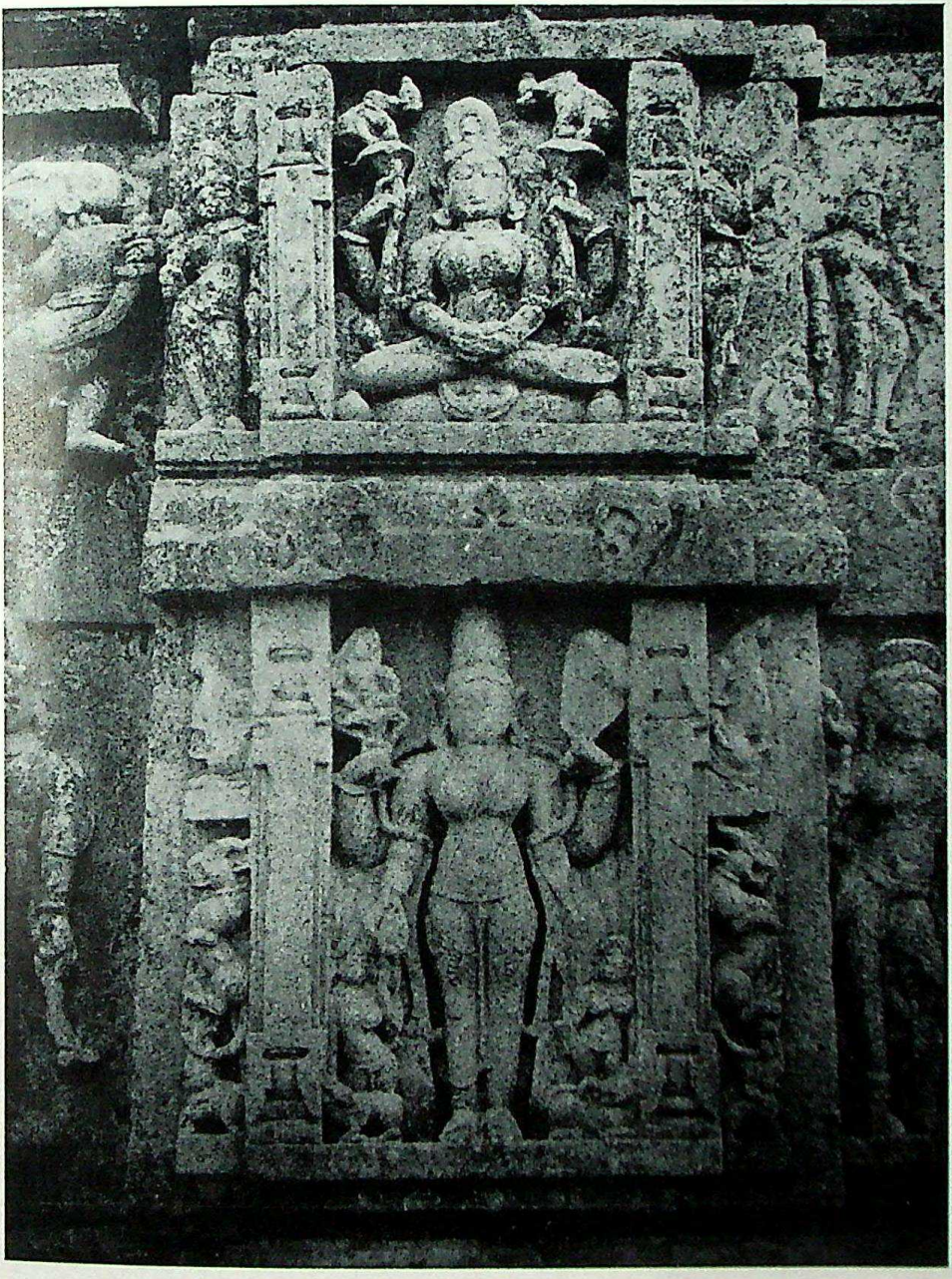
XXIX. Śaiva deity, Saheth-Maheth.

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



XXX. Pārvatī, Kadwaha.

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



XXXI. Pārvatī, Kadwaha.

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XXXII. Kalyāṇasundaramūrti, Batesara.

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XXXIII. Umāmaheśvara, Hingalajgarh.

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XXXIV. Ardhanārīśvara, Elephanta.

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Agam Kala
Prakashan